



Myanmar Partners in Policy and Research

MYS Capacity Analysis

Final Report

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Acronyms

APCOM	Asia Pacific Coalition on Male Sexual Health
APCRSHR	Asia Pacific Conference on Reproductive and Sexual Health and Rights
ART	Antiretroviral therapy
ARV	Antiretroviral drug
ATHENA	ATHENA network
BOD	Board of directors
CBO	Community based organization
CEC	Central Executive Committee
FSW	Female sex worker
GYCA	Global Youth Coalition on HIV/AIDS
ICAAP	International Congress on AIDS in Asia and the Pacific
ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development
INGO	International nongovernmental organization
KAP	Key-affected populations
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MPG	Myanmar Positive Group
MSI	Marie Stopes International
MSM	Men who have sex with men
MYS	Myanmar Youth Stars
NAP	National AIDS Programme
NGO	Nongovernmental organization
NSP	National Strategic Plan
PLHIV	People living with HIV
PWID	People who inject drugs
RMNCH+A	Reproductive, Maternal, Neonatal, and Child Health Plus Adolescence approach
SHG	Self-help group
SRH	Sexual and reproductive health
STI	Sexually transmitted infection
TOT	Training of trainers
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WHO	World Health Organization
YKAP	Young key affected population
YMCA	Young Men's Christian Association
YVC	Youth Voices Count

Executive Summary

- **Youth enthusiasm for volunteering:** MYS consists of a group of interested youth volunteering their time and energy to implement projects. MYS's strengths are their enthusiasm to learn and contribute to their communities, as well as their ability to reach all four YKAPs in many townships throughout the country, working with INGOs.
- **Potential for unique organizational vision and strategy:** As there are many KAP CBOs working effectively in Myanmar, MYS is at a point where it needs to redefine its "reason for existence." MYS should develop a unique organizational vision and strategies that emphasize the strength of MYS as a **youth organization** that can mobilize all four YKAPs in multiple geographic locations in innovative ways.
- **Need for organizational capacity building:** MYS needs organizational development and capacity-building before or in parallel to pursuing funded project objectives with collaborating agencies. Currently, MYS activities are dominated by projects supported by restricted funds, leaving few resources and little time to prioritize essential organizational development and ongoing maintenance. MYS must clearly understand its internal organizational needs and prioritize them in their activities. They include improving the internal accountability, building the system of active member participations, and cultivating the second line of management through active skill development and new recruitment.
- **Including and respecting all YKAPs:** The leadership of MYS is dominated by MSM, and it has been challenging for them to mobilize and engage young FSWs, PWID, and PLHIV. The diverse needs of other YKAPs such as FSWs and PWID are not well understood or appreciated by MYS leaders. The organizational culture that recognizes and accepts differences across YKAP communities is still needed among MSM members. Furthermore, a new organizational structure that encourages the participation of FSW and PWID and meets the needs of all YKAPs is needed.
- **Lack of core funding and need for greater financial accountability:** Despite multiple collaborations with INGOs, MYS does not have a budget for core operational and administrative costs, and suffers from the lack of funding for network maintenance such as scheduled monthly meetings with township focal persons. Their ability to raise funds for ongoing organizational needs is closely tied to their capacity to demonstrate transparency and accountability, which has been challenging for MYS leaders. Guidance and assistance from partner INGOs on this issue would greatly benefit the network.

Background

The Link Up program led by Alliance Myanmar has been implementing activities with Myanmar Youth Stars (MYS) to strengthen participants' capacity to fight stigma and discrimination against young people who are at elevated risk of HIV/AIDS. MYS is a network of young key populations (YKAPs), which includes young men who have sex with men (MSM), young people who inject drugs (PWID), and young female sex workers (FSWs). Link Up capacity-building activities include providing MYS with core funding for staff and office space, as well as mentoring with a specific focus on advocacy and youth engagement. Between March 2015 and August 2015, Myanmar Partners in Policy and Research (MPPR) has engaged in participatory capacity assessment activities to describe the Link Up project's effect on MYS's advocacy capacity (i.e., internal impact), with a secondary aim of describing the network's policy engagement and influence (i.e., external impact).

Link Up Advocacy and Policy Strategy with MYS

According to the strategy document revised in 2014, the ultimate goals of the advocacy efforts of the Link-Up project were to influence the drafting processes of the following two national strategic documents, and reflect the voices of young key affected populations in the process. The descriptions of the aims were provided as follows:

1. By 2015, consultation and meaningful involvement of young key populations is integral to the drafting process of the new HIV & AIDS National Strategic Plan in 2016/2017.
2. The SRHR of young key populations is included in the Adolescent Health and Development Plan (2014-2019) by 2015.

Their broad strategies to achieve these goals were to 1) strengthen youth leadership and capacity of MYS, 2) build partnerships and coalitions supporting MYS, 3) gather evidence of human rights abuses and how HIV/AIDS impacts YKAPs' lives, and 4) influence related policymaking processes.

Youth leadership and capacity-building trainings were to be provided to enable YKAPs to engage meaningfully in policymaking processes. Building partnerships with others (i.e., adults) already engaged in the policymaking and implementation processes was meant to facilitate meaningful youth involvement as well as increase understanding and appreciation of YKAP issues. The project attempted to generate evidence around YKAPs' SRH- and HIV-related situations to be fed into policies as well as key messages for development and advocacy efforts. The policies and policymaking processes were to be influenced to ensure that they cover the SRHR of YKAPs. Key activities of MYS to achieve these goals were planned by Link Up as follows:

- (1) Selection of YKAP advocates
- (2) Capacity-building

- Training on HIV, adolescent health and development, and National Strategic Plans
 - Orientation to HIV/AIDS Working Groups
 - Training on leadership, communication, and facilitation skills
 - English language training
 - Training on human rights monitoring and reporting system
- (3) Information sharing and networking
- YKAP advocates regular Meetings
 - Local events, meetings, and workshops
- (4) Influencing policy
- Participation in HIV/AIDS international conferences and global meetings
 - Advocacy through mass media (TV, talk radio, Facebook)
- (5) Mentoring for MYS members

Objectives and Methods of the Capacity Assessment

The aim of this assessment was to document the Link Up project's effect on MYS's advocacy capacity (i.e., internal impact), with a secondary aim of describing the network's policy engagement and influence (i.e., external impact). More specifically, the study aimed to describe the following five areas:

1. progress towards short-term Link Up advocacy objectives
2. individual capacity of MYS members
3. organizational capacity of the MYS network
4. external policy engagement and influence (*if appropriate*)
5. the implementation of REAct among MYS members

MPPR engaged in a consultative process with the Population Council, MYS, and Alliance Myanmar to identify appropriate methods for the assessment. The assessment activities included the following:

1. Desk reviews of documents
2. Individual interviews
3. Capacity analysis workshop
4. "Significant change" story collections

A review of relevant documents was conducted to gain understanding of the network as well as to check the completeness and quality of relevant supporting documents. The review checked for information such as mission, goals, objectives, organogram, job descriptions, management rules and policies, and work plans with specific goals and timeline of MYS as well as Link Up activities. The documents reviewed included network constitutions, project strategic plan, work plans, workshop reports, and monitoring reports.

Semi-structured individual interviews with 20 MYS leaders and members and five stakeholders were conducted to gain in-depth understanding of strengths and weaknesses of the network. The leaders of the MYS were defined as members of the Central Executive Committee (CEC) and Board of Directors (BOD). The individual interviews consisted of six sections:

1. Involvement and accountability
2. Advocacy
3. Knowledge and skills
4. Internal and external communication
5. Leadership
6. Management and finance

Detailed descriptions of the individual interviews and results are available in a separate report.

A two-day capacity analysis workshop was also conducted with 26 members of MYS to facilitate discussions and analysis of organizational capacities of on June 19-20, 2015. The sessions in the workshop involved a variety of participatory activities: mapping of active MYS members, organizational timeline of past activities and events, SWOT analysis of the network in capacity domains, problem trees for identified issues, scoring of accountability aspects, diagrams of partner networks, and storytelling about the impacts of MYS. Discussions were structured so as to allow individual perceptions to be compared with the collective opinion of participants and also to see how much consensus there is in the network on these issues. The outputs producing during the workshop were in the form of diagrams, scores, timeline, problem tree and SWOT analyses, and discussion summaries on flip charts. The results of the activities were compiled and analyzed. For more detailed descriptions of the activities and results, please see separate MYS Capacity Analysis Workshop Report.



In order to gain a richer picture of changes in members' lives and abilities to participate in policy-related advocacy efforts, the assessment included "significant change" stories, participants' oral and written personal stories about how MYS membership impacted their lives. The stories were gathered through personal writings solicited among members or oral dictations of their narratives recorded and transcribed. The stories were selected and analyzed to illustrate the extent and quality of impact that membership brought to their lives.

Demographic background of interviewees

A total of 21 MYS members were individually interviewed¹: 15 males and six females. Among them, there were 13 MSM, 3 PWID, 2 FSWs, and 6 PLHIV (populations not mutually exclusive). The average age of the interviewees was 25 years old, with a range of 19 to 31. The MYS members' level of education was relatively high. Among the MYS members interviewed, nine members had attended a university, 10 completed 10th grade, and only two had less than 10th grade education. All interviewees held either a paid or unpaid position. Four members had a professional occupation, five had a job in the commercial sector, and 12 members worked as paid or volunteer outreach workers or staff for a

¹ While we planned for 30 interviews at the beginning of the project, the pool of MYS members available for interviews was smaller than expected. While MYS could not provide a member list, the number of core members readily available for interview was estimated as 20 -25.

nongovernmental organization (NGO) or a community based organization (CBO). In addition, five stakeholders from UNESCO, UNAIDS, Alliance Myanmar, and MSI were also interviewed.

List of interviewees

1) MYS Members:

No.	ID	Age	Gender	Occupation/ Organization	YKAP group*
1	KMH	30	M	NGO senior program officer	MSM, PLHIV
2	MTO	21	M	CBO project manager	MSM
3	MMH	28	M	CBO project manager	MSM
4	HL	27	M	CBO volunteer	MSM
5	ATH	27	M	CBO staff	MSM
6	ZYHM	24	M	CBO volunteer trainer	MSM, PWID
7	ZPP	26	M	Retail assistant	MSM
8	HHW	26	M	Outreach worker	MSM
9	PEP	27	F	Outreach worker	PLHIV, FSW
10	AA	23	M	Driver	PWID
11	TPZ	23	M	CBO health worker	MSM
12	AM	25	M	Lawyer	MSM
13	EMK	23	F	CBO Staff	FSW
14	AKO	26	M	Company employee	MSM
15	AMT	19	M	CBO staff	PWID
16	ANL	21	F	CBO staff	PLHIV
17	ZMP	26	F	CBO staff	PLHIV
18	CC	20	F	CBO outreach worker	PLHIV
19	AKK	28	M	CBO outreach worker	MSM
20	HHY	NA	F	NGO project assistant	NA
21	PP	31	M	CBO peer educator	MSM, PLHIV

*While some represent and reach FSWs/PWIDs, they could be ex-, occasional, or active workers/users.

2) Stakeholders:

No.	Name of Respondent	Position	Organization
1	Dr. Pyi Phy	National Programme Officer -HIV	UNESCO
2	Dr. Zaw Myo	Communication Officer	Alliance Myanmar
3	Dr. Soe Naing	Executive Director	Alliance Myanmar
4	Dr. Ne Tun Zaw	Program Manager	MSI
5	Dr. Kyaw Hlaing	Community Mobilization and Networking Adviser	UNAIDS

Findings

Origin of MYS



In November 2012, three founding members of MYS came together for the first time in Bangkok for a leadership training called “New Gen training” targeting YKAPs organized by UNESCO and Youth Lead. They received a short course for capacity building aimed ultimately at contributing to the national AIDS response. As a result of the workshop, MYS was formed by young active members in Yangon to strengthen the network of YKAPs, and to initiate HIV-related activities targeting their peers.

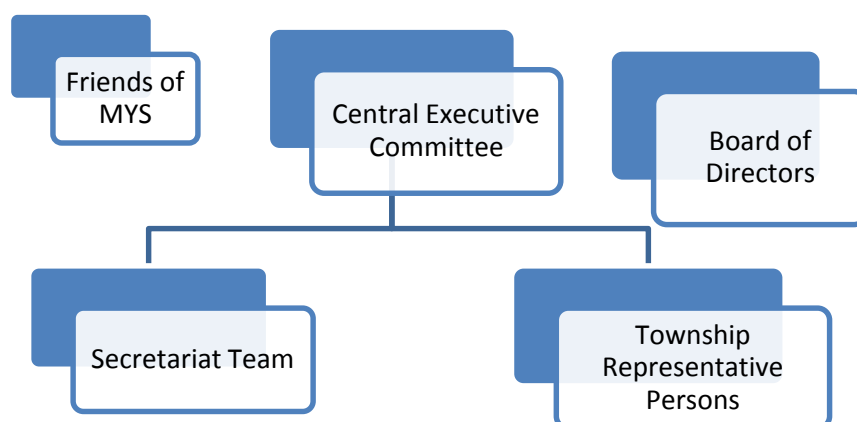
MYS saw their mission as advocating and creating opportunities for YKAPs to access information, prevention, care, and treatment of HIV/AIDS, as well as promoting equal rights and enabling empowerment. The leaders aimed to achieve these goals through providing accurate information on HIV/AIDS and SRHR and promoting safe behaviors among YKAPs, as well as through creating opportunities and advocating equal rights for YKAPs.

UNESCO has continued to provide support and guidance since 2013 to make MYS a well-established network of YKAP in Myanmar. As of March 2015, MYS works with multiple INGOs and local partners such as CBOs and YKAP networks. MYS currently does not maintain an office but members supported by Link Up project holds desks in Alliance Myanmar in Yangon.

Organizational Structure

The MYS constitution developed in 2012 stipulated MYS organizational structure and roles and responsibilities of working committees including the Board of Directors with four persons representing each YKAP and one technical advisor. MYS’s criteria for membership was age 15 to 30, and a member of any of four YKAP communities, including MSM, PWID, FSW, and PLHIV. The governance structure of MYS include Board of Directors (volunteers), CEC members (volunteers), and paid project staff, and township focal persons (volunteers). When members age beyond 30 years old, the upper limit of membership age restriction, they had options of serving as “Friends of MYS.” The members of the CEC and township focal persons were to be elected through member votes.

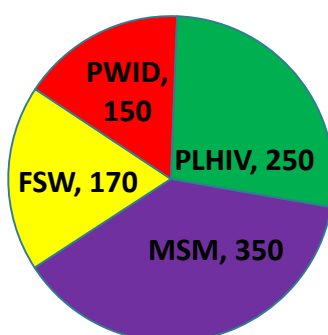
Governance Structure of MYS



[Source: MYS Presentation by HMO (10 March, 2015)]

YKAP Proportions [among participants in training organized by MYS]

(As of Dec 2014)



[Source: MYS Presentation by MMH (10 March, 2015)]

In reality, the actual organizational structure was much more fluid with members changing frequently.

As of June 2015, the network consisted of three BOD members (however, there was just one active BOD member), nine CEC members (with the leader being the Yangon representative), 19 township focal persons, and 19 assistant focal persons. In addition, there were about 110 regular members throughout the country.

While MYS boasts about 1,000 registered members in 16 townships (see the pie chart above), this figure is misleading. In reality, MYS derived this count by enumerating the number of people who had

participated in past trainings and workshops. These people were unreachable for ongoing mobilization, and there was no updated list of these registered members readily available. During our workshop, the participants collectively estimated about 160 active members in 19 cities and townships in total who could be contacted and involved in organizational activities - all volunteers except two staff employed by the Link Up project. ("Active member" was defined as those who have been involved in organizational activities and could be contacted and mobilized for future activities.)

Motivations & Expectations of Members

1) Opportunities to learn and contribute to communities

New member recruitment for MYS was conducted mostly through informal processes. Most members had joined the network through personal connections, especially via friends and social media such as Facebook. Existing active members, in addition to township focal persons, played an important role in recruitment and encouraging participation, especially in local townships.

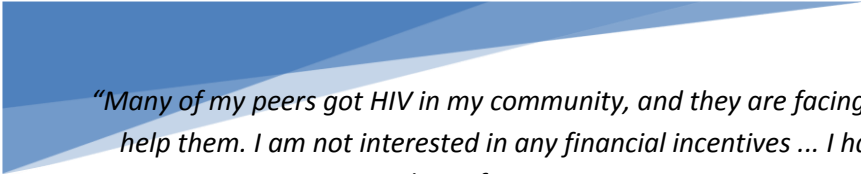
Other entry points were trainings and events organized by MYS and others. Some township members joined MYS after learning about its activities from community based self-help group meetings organized by peer educators. In addition, many MYS members joined the network by attending "HIV Response and Youth Leadership" trainings the network organized.

The main motivation of new members in joining the network was **opportunities to contribute to their communities. The spirit of volunteerism** among MYS members came out strongly in their motivation to participate. Members often spent their own money to get things done. One member said, *"We are working for others, not for our own good. We often have to spend from our pocket but should not be complaining."* Another similar motivation was to participate in individual capacity building and other MYS activities.

"My interests in MYS started with the HIV Response and Youth Leadership training that they did in my township. After attending the training, I learned more about how I could contribute and how MYS can help our peers. Then, I decided to join the network."

-MYS member, MSM

The point that members were motivated by opportunities to learn and contribute seem particularly important for the network as it attempts to mitigate the issue of high turnover among members. The key to member retention will be providing opportunities to participate in activities that are rewarding, motivating, and self-expressive.



“Many of my peers got HIV in my community, and they are facing stigma. I wanted to help them. I am not interested in any financial incentives ... I have a good job, good position and satisfactory income. I just want to contribute my service.”

MYS member, MSM

Level of Involvement

1) Low involvement of regular members and heavily centralized leadership

The members interviewed generally felt that the level of member involvement was low, particularly among non-CEC members. There were about seven regular members in Yangon, but they were not regularly in communication with the leaders or CEC members. Members from townships also found it hard to participate. The township focal persons complained that they tended not to receive updates from Yangon and be excluded from project planning. The members pointed that they had access to information only when their townships were involved in project implementations. The quality of information they received also tended to be poor with limited amount of information with short notices. For example, when the capacity workshop for this assessment was organized by the MYS leaders, the members from townships arrived in Yangon without knowing exactly what the event was about or for what purposes.

Furthermore, the township members stated that it was not easy for townships to be involved in activities. Township focal points have played key roles in organizing local activities, but they felt that they did not receive enough support or credit for this. Instead, they were generally regarded as external members with limited skills and capacities. There were other organizational difficulties that hampered the participations of township members. Township focal persons often did not have updated lists of members as member turnover tended to be high, especially for the role of township focal person because it was a volunteer position with little resources. They often had to expend their personal monetary resources to get things done, and as the township focal persons gained new employment, they often quit their volunteer roles.

The involvement of regular members in project activities including periodic meetings, trainings, and other activities seemed critical in revitalizing the network, and members recognized that the lack of communication between townships and Yangon was one of the major problems. Though both sides tended to blame each other - township members complaining that Yangon leaders did not contact them while Yangon CEC members criticizing that township members did not answer or return their calls-, the leaders were trying to find ways to correct the problem.

2) Uneven opportunities for involvement

However, **the level of involvement of “ordinary members” (i.e., those who were neither CEC members nor township focal points) in decision-making and activities was found to be uneven.** Interviews with ordinary members suggested that they had limited knowledge of how decisions were made or how work plans were developed. Involvement in decision-making processes has been limited to the leaders and a few CEC members. An NGO staffer working closely with MYS reported that, *“in the past, the two leaders made decisions by themselves. Lately they seem to involve other CEC members.”* Member involvement in activities was also uneven. For example, given the limited opportunities, it was challenging to decide how to fairly select participants for trainings and other activities. Limited access to information and updates by members in local townships further hampered the involvement of existing members creating a vicious cycle.

“I feel that some members get selected for multiple trainings and activities again and again ... Sometimes, it would be better if they could give chance to other members who would do more for the network... A lot of members have long applied for trainings but have not yet been selected... Some people with potential are still waiting to participate in trainings and workshops. But (I understand) there are only a limited number of trainings. I can see there are also budget constraints, of course.”

- MYS member, township focal

3) Lack of time and money

The lack of time and money on the part of members were major barriers to participation.

“Commitments to primary jobs” was cited as a main reason by many members for not participating in the network’s activities and meetings. Another important barrier was unsupported member expenses involved in participating in activities. The lack of core funding to meet basic administrative expenses was found to be a major constraint for member involvement. The network did not have financial resources to support its members, and sometimes members had to shoulder expenses when no sponsor was found. For example, some members had to take unpaid leave from their jobs to attend trainings and meetings, or some spent on transport for participating in activities and meetings.

The cost of transportation and communication such as telephone and Internet service also posed a significant barrier for member participation, in spite of the fact that members needed to keep in touch with each other in order to continue to be informed and motivated.

“Some avoid activities because they cannot afford to spend from their own pockets.”

– MYS member

“It would be great if MYS can support transportation charge for monthly meeting and logistics support. Members would be more motivated. Administrative staff should also be recruited in MYS. Most MYS members involved are volunteers though some are active and some are inactive, but it is impossible to maintain that for a long term. Even when something has happened within members or someone makes a mistake, it is not easy to take any corrective action because everyone is participating as a volunteer.”

- MYS member

4) Disproportionate YKAP representation and prejudice across YKAP groups

One characteristic and strength of MYS was their **inclusive YKAP membership** involving MSM, PWID, FSW, and PLHIV. The coalition not only allowed projects to reach a variety of beneficiaries, but also brought positive impacts on members by triggering deeper realizations about social stigma and discrimination, allowing them to find a common thread that unites the oppressed.

“Drug users, sometimes they cry when they find out that we are the same. They cry when they find out that they share common difficulties with sex workers and MSM... They can’t normally trust others and are isolated. People don’t trust them either, but when they find that we are the same, they cry.”

– MYS leader

While the network aimed to represent all four key YKAP groups, the actual levels of involvement among YKAP were not well balanced. One member estimated that about 70% of MYS members were MSM while 20% were FSW (with overlap with PLHIV), and even fewer for PWID. The participation of some YKAP groups - particularly those of FSWs and PWID - was also far lower than that of MSM) and PLHIV. Some stakeholders expressed the opinion that the primary goal of MYS to represent all YKAPs was challenged by the dominance of MSM in the network.

One reason for this had to do with the composition of the MYS leadership: BOD and CEC members were mainly MSMs. Moreover, the leadership did not have strong female representatives as FSWs usually did not want to identify themselves as such. A township focal person who has been actively trying to reach other YKAPs in his area said:

“The representation of YKAPs (in MYS) is limited as MSM dominates the network”

- INGO staffer

“(I found) only one sex worker but so far cannot convince her to join. I feel they don’t want to risk exposing themselves by associating with us.”

- MYS member, township focal

The fact that MYS is dominated by MSM had unintended consequences on the level of participation of other YKAPs. One person who represented FSWs stated that it was not easy for FSWs to participate in MYS activities. She felt FSW needs were not understood by MSM who were younger, male, better off, and better educated.

“They wouldn’t understand FSWs’ concerns. They are too young. Many sex workers are the head of household, and have to earn every day.”

- MYS member, FSW

She pointed out that it was hard for FSWs to leave their town and attend meetings and trainings. Even if they managed the time, she said, they couldn’t afford to pay the transportation costs in advance to attend meetings in Yangon - not even if reimbursed later, as they had not been provided advance money to participate.

Aside from these practical issues, FSWs were also afraid of being discriminated against within the network. One informant thought that there was a “tension” between MSM and FSWs in MYS. Even within the network, FSWs were scared to disclose their FSW status, fearing stigma and prejudice by other members.

“They tease us about our clothing and the way we talk. They look down on us, and that makes us feel hurt.”
- MYS member, FSW

MSM members’ disrespectful comments and attitudes made some FSWs uncomfortable and withdrawn. Therefore, FSWs tended to be less interactive and some isolated themselves even within the network. They were also constantly worried about police arresting them if they openly participated in events as FSWs. In short, the sense of awkwardness, shame, and lack of respect were not well understood by some male members who regarded FSW with prejudice and stigma. This resulted in the lower degree of participation by FSW members, and their lack of representation in decision-making processes, creating further lack of power.

The network also had a weak link with young PWID, resulting in few PWID members. The typical character of MSM members was active and lively, while PWID tend to be reserved and isolated. The addictive nature of drug use also has made it harder for PWID to actively participate. *“These guys (PWID) only think about how to get drugs. They are also not active in trainings. They are just dozing off after taking methadone.”* MSM and PWID members sometimes find less commonality and were unable to connect with each other. One PWID member of MYS said, “In my township, the MSM and DU communities do not mingle. We just stay away and live separate lives.” (Individual interview, PWID) Another point was that MYS leaders did not have regular engagement with young PWID. *“The existing PWID members of MYS have become older than our age criteria (18-27). Those older PWID were then expelled from the network,”* said a former CEC member. One of the MYS leaders recognized the need for strengthening the PWID network. He said, *“Lately I try to emphasize more on PWID because FSWs have stronger networks.”*



A key to successful activities and member satisfaction – member involvement

At their best performance, MYS could operate under strong leadership with a high level of participation by its CEC members, who were eager to contribute to the success of tasks they set to accomplish. International Youth Day (IYD) in Myanmar in August 2014, which drew about 200 people, was identified as one such successful event by many members. The level of participation by MYS was high, as all CEC members, township focal points, and project staff participated along with Alliance Myanmar members. The MYS leaders had learned about the existence of IYD from other INGO in a meeting in Yangon, and discussed the possibility of organizing it in Myanmar with CEC members. They then communicated with potential funders and partners, such as Alliance Myanmar, UNAIDS, and UNESCO. They convened an MYS internal meeting to inform other members, and organized preparatory meetings to identify tasks to be divided including arrangements for participant list, venue, and printing of IEC materials. The ideas for the contents of the event were brought out by members of the MYS, including sharing of life stories, music performance to increase unity among YKAP, and dancing performance. Stakeholders also invited other CBOs to be involved. The event functioned as an advertisement for the MYS network. There was a wide range of media coverage of the event and MYS, the NGOs, and UN agencies came to recognize them as a representative of YKAPs. These organizations and the media came to better understand the needs of YKAPs, and showed their interest in addressing their issues. One of the media outlets present covered the events in a news journal.

Leadership

Kyaw Min Htun (KMH) has been recognized as the original leader of MYS by both internal and external associates. Until recently, he has been singlehandedly leading the network with his charismatic character as well as with his networking, fundraising, facilitation, and report writing skills. As there was a member age limit in the MYS constitution, KMH has been voted in as the Board of Director member in 2013 MYS election. Members, particularly non-MSM members, felt they did not have sufficient skills and confidence to replace KMH and wanted him to stay. A member said,

“Nobody recommended others from YKAPs or even voted themselves though they could have done so. No one actually wanted to take the responsibility partially because it is a volunteer work. Besides, KMH is capable, active and good at English.”

The other member taking the leadership role was Myo Min Htet (MMH) who led the CEC. MMH possessed managerial skills with experience of running a CBO, and was able to maintain close communication with CEC members. “MMH treats all of them well as friends. So members discuss and talk about detailed matters in general with MMH” as one respondent mentioned. He also manages task delegation such as who goes to which meeting. Overall, KMH and MMH had different types of strengths and skills, and complemented each other well making a good pair of leaders.

1) MYS lacks the second line of leadership

According to the MYS constitution, the CEC was supposed to be the leading body of the network in decision-making and management. KMH had been attempting to involve CEC members more in decision making roles. However, for the most part, KMH and MMH remained the only persons regularly and actively involved in decision-making.

One of the major challenges to MYS leadership was task delegation and the development of the second line of leadership to assist current leaders and to prepare future leaders. The level of delegation from the two leaders to other members has been less than ideal. Members involved in decision-making process has been limited to KMH and a few CEC members. An NGO staffer working closely with MYS pointed out:

“In the past, they (KMH & MMH) made decisions by themselves. Lately they seem to involve other CEC members... It is important to provide other members with jobs, responsibilities, and opportunities (to grow), and develop the confidence of other CEC members”

- MYS member

Similarly, a senior official from a partner organization said,

“MYS still needs to develop participation and leadership skills of their members. For now, not many members are involved in making decisions. There can be a few reasons behind this. Most members do not have experience. And it can also be because a few people are dominating. It may be because other members do not have opportunities to participate in decision-making”

As mentioned earlier, according to their constitution, the key body of MYS, the CEC, was to make collective decisions, but in actuality, it played little leadership nor decision-making role, as the two leaders tend to take the central role. One young CEC member stated, “Our constitution is not really alive. It is only on paper.” During the last annual meeting in December 2014, MYS members discussed that the constitution should be “revived.” CEC members have been encouraged to get more involved in decision-making and to participate actively in MYS activities such as youth-related meetings and training facilitation.

A combination of these factors seemed to perpetuate the vicious cycle of the pattern: dominating strong leadership, insufficient experience and skills of general members, and limited opportunities to participate. In order to nurture skills among members, KMH occasionally attempted to train other active CEC members and project staff, but himself being a fulltime employee of another agency, the time he could spare had been limited. The age limit to MYS membership and the limited years for which each member could participate also posed a unique challenge to MYS. A respondent pointed out, “Unlike other networks, MYS has age restrictions for its membership. This makes second-line leaders more critical for the network.”

2) MYS needs a larger vision and long term strategies

Another challenge for MYS leadership was shifting their focus from the implementation of short-term funded projects to cultivating a longer term organizational vision and strategy. Currently, the resources of MYS are spent on the implementation of short-term funded projects, and the network lacks a vision or strategy for organizational growth. Their limited time, energy, and resources are directed

towards many different short-term funded projects with a variety of partners and donors, and their internal needs and skill development are neglected. Some stakeholders who have been closely observing the network seem to see the same challenge. Two members of INGOs stated:

“MYS should position themselves carefully for long-term success rather than paying too much attention to just trainings... If they don’t position themselves strategically, they will get weaker in the longer term... The need of youth is changing. They need to remember this changing context... They will need to expand their scope, not only HIV for example. Is there a role they can play in SRMNCH plus?”

“It seems like they (MYS) are reliant on projects. If these projects cease, the network might not survive for long as there are other competitors. I think they need organizational development for the network in a longer term.”

Management & Accountability

1) MYS management relied mostly on the two leaders

For reasons stated above, the responsibilities of managing MYS activities fell on the shoulders of the two leaders: Kyaw Min Htun (KMH) and Myo Min Htet (MMH). MYS works with a wide array of donors and partners such as UNESCO, UNFPA, UNAIDS, and international coalitions. These entities were mostly introduced to MYS and kept in touch by KMH. While MMH had been increasingly taking up management tasks including financial reporting, KMH has been singlehandedly drafting technical documents including proposals and reports to these agencies.

2) MYS activities were “project driven,” with few financial resources for core network functions and administration

Most issues MYS faced were related to the fact that they were heavily focused on project implementation and less on network strengthening. A staffer from a partner agency pointed this out, saying:

“They are too project driven. For example, larger organizations involve them and push them for projects. I think MYS is still not very strong in initiating their own projects. So it has become just a part of someone else’s strategy rather than actively leading their own initiatives.”

One manifestation of this could be seen in the use of funding. While project activities were well funded, CEC members and township focal persons stated that the network faced financial constraints in organizing regular internal network activities, including quarterly meetings.

Lack of core funding led to weak network administration, which posed a major issue in maintaining the network. The lack of staff dedicated to the internal organizational administration was one consequence of this. MYS’s only paid personnel - two project staff funded by Link Up - had office space and a computer in Alliance Myanmar’s office, but focused mostly on project implementation rather than internal coordination. They were not consistently involved in network management. The job

descriptions and recruitment processes of the two MYS staff were overseen by the two leaders and focal persons of MYS in 2014, when they distributed a vacancy announcement through NGO networks.

Most MYS internal activities were ad hoc, and there were no proactive organizational vision or strategies beyond project implementation needs dictated by external partners. According to a CEC member, MYS developed an annual work plan but kept the time frame flexible depending on availability of funding. One senior member who has been involved since the network's inception pointed out:

"In order to work for the YKAPs effectively, MYS has first to strengthen its own policies, procedures, role descriptions, rules and regulations. We also need to learn from other networks."

- MYS member, MSM

"Link up supports projects financially, partially or fully, but MYS needs to submit what they would like to do and what kind of activities they would like to engage in."

- Staffer from a partner INGO

Related to issues discussed above was insufficient internal strategies and work planning. An observer from a partner agency pointed out the need for MYS to strengthen its management skills in general, and highlighted MYS's difficulties in maintaining and developing human resources.

"Challenges are not unique to working with MYS but their capacity to implement is still limited. And like other CBOs, staff turnover is very high. After working for some time and gaining some skills, staff leaves for other jobs."

- Staffer from a partner INGO

3) Need to strengthen financial management and oversight

Because MYS had not been officially registered as a local NGO, the network was unable to directly receive funding from donors. As a result, most funding had been channeled through the Alliance Myanmar's financial system. The disbursements from Alliance Myanmar were made to the MYS bank account, a joint account among project staff, BOD and CEC, on monthly basis based on the MYS project work plan. MMH worked on financial reporting, which were usually first prepared by project staff, counter checked by MMH, and approved and signed by KMH. Alliance Myanmar had been coaching some members of MYS in terms of the financial accountability for projects including Link Up and UNESCO funded HIV trainings.

However, weak financial management - including proper oversight and financial reporting - has been a problem for the network. Some of the stakeholders interviewed pointed out the need for MYS to improve the timeliness and the quality of financial reports. A senior officer from a partner organization explained his observations:

"We have an experience of funding a quarterly meeting of MYS. It took them too long to submit a report after completion of the activity. Because of that delay, even I was pressured by my finance people... There is no one (in MYS) dedicated to preparing financial reports. It's like only two people are working in all aspects of MYS ... they would face more challenges if it were EU or Global Fund reports".

- Staffer from a partner INGO

During this documentation exercise, the network was faced with issues arising from unauthorized expenses charged to unbudgeted lines. The responsibility for this was mainly placed on project staff, particularly a project assistant assigned for financial management throughout the 2014 fiscal year. Many respondents blamed the lack of financial management capacity in the organization. Some members felt that Alliance Myanmar could have provided more thorough financial management orientation and guidance involving more MYS members. One member explained:

“Financial management orientation was only provided to project staff, not to other MYS members. Alliance Myanmar financial formats are too complicated for MYS staff.”

- MYS member

Partly due to these issues, the network faced financial constraints in organizing regular internal activities including quarterly meetings.

Furthermore, problems in financial reporting may have negatively affected donor confidence and trust. One leader stated:

“There are no guaranteed funds for regular quarterly or annual meetings. I have to go out and look for it each time. When I talk to donors, they say they don’t have a budget line for this, and will not fund it unless I am there to lead and oversee. We need to build more trust.”

- MYS leader

Lack of resources also meant inability to show visible short-term results. This posed another problem, especially when MYS had to compete with other networks targeting similar population and providing similar services. A senior member of MYS gave an example of such an issue.

*“LGBT network can afford to send its members to go to townships and collect data on rights-related issues. **They receive honorarium.** And their clients who report cases also receive financial assistance. For us, we can just provide some pamphlets only. We cannot afford to provide any support to our YKAP clients and members.”*

- MYS member

4) Weak internal administration and communication challenges

Another issue found with MYS management was loss of member information due to lack of proper information management. One factor is a high turnover of project staff and members, and the lack of clear procedure for handover process. For instance, during this documentation exercise, it was found that no one had a clear idea of the total number or locations of active members because there was no information consistently kept and regularly updated. In local townships, information was not handed down to successors, nor was it relayed to Yangon. Similarly, information from Yangon was not properly disseminated to townships in a complete and timely manner.

The lack of paid staff dedicated to organizational administration of the network largely contributed to this problem. Although MYS had a project coordinator and a project assistant funded by Link Up, and

Alliance Myanmar has been providing a space and a computer in its office to these staff members, they tend to focus on project implementation needs stipulated by partner organizations rather, than internal coordination and organizational administration. While flexible, the paid project coordinator has been focusing on conducting trainings, workshops, and meetings with the support of the project assistant. Though MYS was involved in drafting job descriptions and recruitment of the staff, the responsibilities of maintaining internal communication within the network were not well thought out for them. During individual interviews and discussions in the workshop, both leaders and members of MYS stated that a strong network coordinator could help overcome internal administration and communication barriers within the network.

5) Inconsistent monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation of projects were mainly based on the availability of funding for M&E activities in each project. Some projects such as Link Up's REAct program had a few monitoring visits in July and December 2014. UNESCO conducted a one-day evaluation workshop to assess the results of HIV and SRHR multiplier trainings delivered in 13 townships across Myanmar in November 2014, and planned to conduct another outcome evaluations in five townships (Kalay, Lashio, Aung Ban, Myit Kyi Nar, and Sittwe). However, many projects implemented by MYS had no plan or budget for M&E including UNESCO and Alliance Myanmar projects.

Similarly, the internal monitoring of the network was inconsistent. According to a member, CEC members and staff were supposed to visit and/or communicate with townships for monitoring and submit a short report.

"There is no regular M&E process but there is some monitoring activities in places. I am not sure for other townships, but for example as a CEC member, I went to Ma-u-bin with other CEC members and monitored what members were doing there including learning their difficulties and the availability of potential YKAP members whom we may want to recruit."

However, the number of such visits had declined due to financial constraints. Township focal persons now reported to the CEC whenever there was an activity in their townships. The lack of communication and monitoring had been noted by members. One CEC member pointed out the lack of inputs from township members: *"We need to get feedback from members and township focal persons."*



Results from the capacity assessment workshop: Internal accountability

During the capacity assessment workshop, members scored five aspects of internal accountability introduced and discussed: 1) member participation, 2) responsibilities to YKAP member needs, 3) M&E, 4) clear organizational policies, and 5) standard procedures for activities. The scores were from 0 being very poor, 1 poor, 2 average, 3 good, to 4 very good. Members ranked MYS internal accountability rather low. The results of the scoring were as follows:

Aspects of Internal Accountability	Avg Scores	Reasons
1) Members can participate in all MYS activities such as training and advocacy	1	Little opportunities to participate; not enough resources to do activities
2) MYS meets the needs of all four YKAP	1.5	All YKAPs are invited but do not participate; FSWs and MSM are not represented proportionately
3) All MYS activities are monitored and evaluated	1.5	There are assessments in trainings and meetings; not enough budget to visit townships to monitor; past monitoring did not produce any outputs
4) All members understand MYS organizational policies (constitution)	1.5	Not everyone is aware of existence of policies/constitution; even project staff do not clearly know rules and responsibilities; not relevant to regular members
5) There are standard procedures for a) finance, b) activities, and c) reporting	2.0	In general, members were unaware of the procedures. a) There are procedures but not followed, existing forms not understood; b) informal process, c) there are reporting formats but unable to write properly

The members also pointed out the weakness that limited access to information and updates by members:

“The most important thing is about transparency and openness. Only then, we all can discuss on what to do in future. Some activities involved only Yangon CEC members. We, township focal persons, were not informed. As a result, we are not fully aware of all activities and developments of the MYS. Then, we cannot know what to suggest for future plans.”

- Township focal person

Internal Communications

1) Internal communications have been mostly informal

Key members of the BOD and CEC had been trying to hold monthly meetings in Yangon in public places such as a park or a cafe in downtown for about two hours. Discussions during these meetings usually included how to organize upcoming trainings, task allocation for the trainings, challenges, inputs from members, future trainings etc. There used to be a monthly recruitment event in Yangon in the past, in which potential members were introduced to other members and MYS activities were explained followed by games and membership sign-up forms. However, these meetings had become sporadic lately due to lack of regular funding support. UNESCO was the agency that used to primarily support these meetings.

Internal communication among members was mostly through informal channels and there were no systematic procedures to disseminate important information. Other than the CEC meetings described above, members only contacted each other informally on an ad hoc basis among those who have access to phone, Viber, or Facebook. Communication - particularly with townships - was informal and sporadic, mostly via phone only with those phone numbers were known to leaders and updated. Even among those contacted, the frequency, content, and timing of contacts tended to be too little and too late. Often an insufficient amount of information about activities was provided to townships and members at the last minute. For example, many participants of the capacity assessment workshop for this documentation exercise received their invitations only a few days prior to the workshop date, with little information about the purpose and content of the workshop.

There were no regularly scheduled member meetings or events, neither in Yangon nor in townships, to which all members could freely participate. Even monthly and quarterly meetings set for the CEC and township focal persons were inconsistently scheduled due mostly to lack of funding: The network could not provide financial support for traveling costs to the meetings in Yangon to focal persons and assistants in townships.

“It would be better if there was a budget for members from other townships to join monthly meetings. It would be also great if there were more frequent events and opportunities for members to attend. Sometimes it is not easy to obtain a leave from work or main organizations they belong to attend a training or meeting in Yangon... The participants of trainings should be more than 30 so that more people could participate.”

- Member from a township

2) Communication with township members was limited mainly to immediate project needs

Communication with township members only occurred when there was an activity that required their participation, usually a training funded by a donor agency. Township focal persons tended to be

contacted only when there were events and trainings involving their townships. A limited number of members were contacted by project staff. There was no systematic regular communication with members, particularly with members outside of Yangon. Because of this, the CEC and other members tended to be inactive when there was no imminent activity to contribute to. One member in a local township said,

“Two-way communication is weak within MYS, among CEC, focal persons and members. There is only communication especially when there is training or meeting by contacting phone. There is little communication via email among MYS members either.”

Besides insufficient funding, another reason for lack of regular communication was that **no system of communication or information dissemination channels were set up, maintained, or systematically used**. Furthermore, no one seemed tasked with the responsibility of maintaining an updated list of members with contact information, and using it to track members for information dissemination.

Another difficulty was inherent in the availability and quality of communication in Myanmar. While members used a variety of devices such as mobile phones, Facebook, and Viber to contact each other, each mode of communication posed potential problems. For example, with telephone, some members could not be reached due to unavailable services in their areas. At times, new phone numbers were not provided by members or members did not answer calls. Neither CEC members nor focal persons had a communication budget, and their ability to make calls was limited. Messages and information were often lost when the intended focal person could not be reached and information was given to others in the township. The existing email list was not regularly updated and many did not receive sent messages to their updated email addresses. Even when a message was successfully sent, members in rural areas did not check email often enough and required follow up with telephone calls. In addition, many members - including CEC members - did not know how to use email.

3) Lack of communication has led to unclear organizational procedures

Similarly, the lack of regular communication had resulted in unclear organizational procedures and uncertainty among members. For example, the procedure for new recruitment in local townships had become uncertain to most members. Previously, the BOD, CEC leaders, or MYS staff used to contact members by phone or send email to focal persons if there was a training or other activities through which new members could be recruited. Focal persons in townships printed out announcements and shared them with other CBOs and self-help groups, collecting the application forms to be sent back to Yangon through long distance express buses. In the past, one former CEC member used to collect the forms from the bus station or express mail gate. After receiving applications forms in Yangon, CEC members chose candidates according to their age, YKAP membership, and the level of interest. But members stated that recently there was no longer regular procedures that they were aware of.

Members of MYS have long been aware of the need for improving both their internal and external communication, and the issue has been pointed out in feedback from members at the 2014 annual meeting. CEC members were making efforts to take more initiative in communicating with each other. The leader, KMH, had advised that the CEC should be more assertive in taking responsibility for communication, and KMH would only provide advice on future activities. MYS and Alliance Myanmar also had a special meeting in early July 2015 to address this issue, and decided to assign MMH, one of the two current leaders, as the focal person for both internal and external communications. However,

as MMH had been single-handedly taking charge of administrative tasks already, it appeared more extensive structural changes in addressing these issues were necessary.

In the MPPR capacity assessment workshop, MYS members themselves found the level of internal communication to be poor, and identified the following reasons:

- 1) Phone networks were segmented in Myanmar and a company useable in one township was not available in another township.
- 2) There was no specific person designated to maintain a list of contacts specifying modes of communication such as phone numbers from different companies and email needed to contact each member.
- 3) Members and focal persons did not have an updated contact list to disseminate information. It was hard to update because the turnover of members was very high. This was also due to the lack of proper handover procedures. This was true for all types of information, including hard copies of key documents, as there was no proper system of storing and maintaining information. Another reason was the lack of personnel designated for information management and dissemination.
- 4) The lack of funding for telephone calls was a major issue. But also the insufficient sense of responsibility to answer or return missed calls on the part of township members was pointed out, which made the receivers of information appear passive in communication to Yangon members. The members described this as “one-way communication.”
- 5) In some townships, members were geographically scattered across a wide area and hard to reach, while other townships had a network of members who belonged to multiple groups and met each other frequently.
- 6) In Yangon, CEC members tried to meet once a month on an ad-hoc basis informally to share updates and plan for upcoming events. Presently, no date or place was set for this meeting. They communicate mostly by phone and Viber.

“I feel MYS is too occupied with projects such as youth advocate activities. The network has lost its broad-based nature it once had. I think it is also a reason why their communication with township members got weaker. Compared to other networks such as SWIM, MPG, MSM, I think MYS is unable to expand their network or involve their members in townships. Other networks are more in touch with their members on the ground – voices from township members reach the central. MYS is not very strong at that.”

- An officer from a partner NGO

External communication with partners and donors

1) Strong network of partners and donors

MYS has received financial and technical support from a several organizations in Myanmar, including Alliance Myanmar, UNESCO, UNAIDS, and UNFPA. The founding member, Kyaw Min Htun, was the key person in maintaining close ties with them and raising funds. Leaders and managers of these organizations often provided mentoring and technical support to MYS, especially in the areas of advocacy and human rights issues. With the support of these agencies, MYS has gained opportunities to present to government officials and members of the Parliament.

MYS also had strong links with in-country and regional youth networks such as Color Rainbow, Kings & Queens, ATHENA Network, Global Youth Coalition on HIV/AIDS (GYCA), and Youth Lead. Engaging in the Link Up project has helped MYS to expand its network and recognitions both domestically and internationally. A senior member of MYS said, *“We went to a conference in Manila. When we introduced ourselves as MYS members, people from some international organization said - Oh, I know MYS. You are implementing Link Up project.”*

MYS also has much to gain from maintaining close ties with these networks. A staffer from INGO articulated this point, *“They should learn from other networks. For example, they should learn how Myanmar Positive Group is sustaining its activities, how SWiM (FSW group) does advocacy etc. MYS members are already generally well educated and smart.”*

2) The level of involvement in external relations among members was uneven

However, the level of involvement with other organizations among members was uneven. Some active members were highly involved in these international network activities such as campaigns against stigma and discrimination on HIV and sexual preferences. But many - including many CEC members - were unable to get involved in donor relations or regional events, partly due to their inability to communicate well in English language both speaking and writing.

Domestically, MYS’s collaboration with other major KAP networks was found to be rather weak. There is an existing network of adult KAP known as “the Seven Networks” (MSM network, Sex Worker network, Drug User network, Myanmar Positive Group, Positive Women Group, Interfaith Network, National NGO Network), addressing similar issues among adult populations. Yet, MYS did not have any coordination mechanism with the Seven Networks or regular communication. One member pointed out, *“It is better we collaborate with the Seven Networks, but they don’t ask us to interact with them, and neither do we.”* (Individual interview, CEC member) One barrier to frequent and formal communication was the organizational structure of MYS as the points of contact were not clear to external stakeholders and partners. A staffer from a partner organization stated, *“It’s not easy to contact them. Their management structure is not clear to us (outsiders).”*

Capacity Building

1) Capacity building of MYS has been mostly in the form of HIV training and workshops

In the past few years, MYS organized approximately 10 trainings for MYS network members and general YKAPs, financially and technically supported by partners such as Alliance Myanmar, UNESCO, and UNFPA. In 2014, these workshops included “HIV Response and Youth Leadership”, “HIV and Sexual Reproductive Health Response Training of Trainers (TOT),” “Human Rights Training,” “Advocacy Training TOT,” “Basic Advocacy Training Workshop,” “Advocacy Strategy Development Workshop,” and “Human Rights and Legal Literacy Training.” Trainings related to advocacy and human rights were mostly supported by Link Up. “Basic HIV response and Youth Leadership Training” is becoming their signature training, as it has been offered many times and serves as a recruitment vehicle for new members.

While the two leaders of MYS have been leading these trainings, **some CEC members were beginning to gain enough experiences and confidence** from attending TOT courses to facilitate the training activities by themselves. The two MYS project staff from Alliance Myanmar (hired under the Link Up program) also supported some of the logistics and administrative work of these trainings. The leaders have been also coaching these project staffs - mainly on how to find venues, organize trainings, communicate with members in townships, and write training reports.

MYS members who have attended these trainings did apply knowledge gained, and they shared basic HIV related information - including prevention methods - with their friends and peers. Regarding legal rights and protection, some members shared their newly acquired knowledge with their peers such as how to protect themselves from police harassment or prevent the arrests of sex workers carrying condoms. Members told how beneficial these shared knowledge were to other YKAP.

“The MSM, using his new legal knowledge gained from an MYS member, asked the police - on what charges are you arresting me? The policeman gave up.”

“I try to share knowledge gained from the trainings with others as much as I can. For example, I now know that only Sub-Inspector has the authority to arrest sex workers (SW), but most SW do not have such kind of knowledge and feel frighten whenever they see a Surveillance Officer. I also learnt that condoms can no longer be used as an evidence for arresting sex workers. If a sex worker who is taking ART is arrested, she should try to contact the organization that provide ART to her, etc. I shared these information with sex workers from other youth groups.”

- 2) The training and workshops organized in townships were useful for both organizers (MYS members) and beneficiary youth

These MYS workshop trainings have reached a large number of YKAPs in multiple townships and created opportunities for MYS members and local youth to participate and learn. In 2014, one-day multiplier workshops on HIV and SRHR were conducted in 13 townships after TOT were done: twice in each township with about 20 participants in one workshop, and reached a total of 520 youths. The purpose of these workshops was to gain HIV and SRHR related information including gender and sexuality, sexual rights of young people, violence, puberty, family planning, and HIV & STI.

These workshops also created valuable opportunities for township members to become actively involved in MYS activities. A township focal person commented:

“It made more youths to join our activities...Together with the assistant focal, I organized everything to make this workshop happened despite many challenges. One major challenge was

that it was just one time activity. Participants of the workshop expected to attend more similar activities.”

Since the leaders and CEC members in Yangon assisted township focal persons to organize the workshops, the workshop created an occasion for central and township members to work together. However, the fact that there were few follow-up activities to the workshop created challenges in maintaining the interest of members in townships.

3) Creating fair opportunities for member participation was a challenge

One challenge the network faced was the fair selection of training participants, who gets to go to what. As mentioned above, some members noted that same members were repeatedly selected to participate in trainings. There was a formal process of participant selection stipulated in the Constitution. The number of participants selected in a given training was set approximately 30. The selection committee was to be formed and choose suitable participants based on the basic criteria of 1) to be a member of the YKAPs, 2) to have interest in community work, 3) persons without prior trainings experience being prioritized. Applicants in townships were to submit their applications to township focal persons, providing in writing their goals for the training and past experience in HIV activities. Township focal persons then were to recommend applicants by marking stars on their application forms, and to go through a phone interview with the selecting committee. MYS members from local townships were supposed to be given priorities to attend these trainings. The names of applicants who have not been selected were supposed to be kept in waiting list for next training.

In reality, the two leaders have been mostly taking responsibilities of organizing trainings and selecting participants as most CEC members did not have time to spare or opportunities to be involved. In early 2015, however, the network has decided that the CEC members would select training participants and facilitate trainings. The leaders were to support them as advisors.

4) The trainings provided did not meet the internal organizational needs of MYS

Another challenge was the fact that the type of capacity building trainings provided by funded projects did not meet the organizational development needs of MYS as a young local organization. While donors supported technical trainings focused on SRH and health related information, **what MYS needed first and foremost were practical skill trainings to be able to effectively organize the network and properly manage projects.** Skill development concerning project management has been mostly learning-by-doing rather than through formal training, though some paid staff received training from Alliance Myanmar. The high turnover of staff and members also posed a difficulty in skill retention within the network as well.

Members stated:

“I have never received skill training from MYS after joining the network. MYS members should get opportunities to attend trainings for computer, English, public speaking, and proposal writing.”

“There is no history of skills training provision in MYS. Previously during the meetings, BOD and CEC said there would be some skills training. I was eager to join those trainings, but later they said that there were no more of these trainings. They did not say the reason but I think it was because there was no funding ... Technical HIV-related trainings are good for new members to

promote interests but for old members skills trainings are important. BOD said that they would ask UNAIDS to support some skill trainings in 2015.”

To date, administrative and management skill trainings such as the use of computer programs, report writing, information presentation, and communication skills have not been provided to MYS members. MYS project staff have been learning these skills on the job, but many other members still lacked these basic skills. In terms of international exposure visits and conferences, only a very limited number of members have been able to participate due to lack of English language skills. Some stakeholders also stressed the need for language skills among MYS members, **especially among potential future leaders.**

During the 2014 annual meeting, MYS members from townships requested skill related training, and Alliance Myanmar’s Link Up Youth Advocate program planned to conduct some trainings to a limited number of Youth Advocates in 2015.

Advocacy and External Policy Engagement

The CEC members and leaders of MYS stressed that engaging in advocacy towards an enabling environment for YKAP was one of the reasons why MYS came into existence, and they have even created a sub-committee for advocacy. Stakeholders interviewed also recognized MYS as an important network that could play a leading role in advocating for YKAPs. It is the only network of YKAPs focusing on issues affecting them, and has gained recognition for that role, especially among members of YKAP, HIV networks, and INGOs.

1) MYS was well connected for YKAP advocacy work

MYS was well connected to regional and global advocate groups such as GYCA, ATHENA Network, APCOM, Youth LEAD, and Youth Voice Counts (YVC). Through these networks, MYS was believed to be well positioned for YKAP advocacy by partner organizations such as Alliance Myanmar, UNESCO, and UNAIDS, all of which have worked with MYS. In particular, Alliance Myanmar has identified MYS as its main partner for policy advocacy.

The Youth Advocate initiative with Alliance Myanmar under Link Up was frequently mentioned by members as the most important funded project for advocacy. The initiative was part of the broader YKAP Advocacy Strategy developed in 2014 with support from the Link Up project. Other non-MYS YKAPs were also involved in the strategy development and consultation process. Some members of MYS, together with other YKAPs from other networks and CBOs, were selected as Youth Advocates by Alliance Myanmar and the MYS CEC using a set of criteria and to be supported by peer mentors who had more experience in the field. It aimed to empower YKAPs by strengthening their capacities to voice their concerns and to advocate for their rights.

2) The major achievement of advocacy efforts that MYS contributed was the inclusion of YPKAP in guidelines and official documents

A major tangible achievement of these advocacy efforts was the inclusion of the term “Young People from Key Affected Populations (YPKAP)” in 2014 National HIV Prevention Guidelines by the National AIDS Programme.

In 2015 May, MYS participated in a Joint Advocacy meeting on strengthening coordination and responses for adolescent and young key populations organized by UNAIDS, UNFPA, UNESCO, UNICEF and the Link Up project. The event aimed at improving awareness of stigma and discrimination facing YKAPs in education, livelihoods and healthcare. It was also intended to improve coordination among the Ministries of Health, Education and Social Welfare for better responses to these issues. MYS was at the center of this advocacy event, as its members shared issues they experienced in their families, communities, schools, healthcare settings and workplace. Upon hearing their experience, a director from the Ministry of Education noted:

“I have never heard about YKAP before, but now I know that they face a lot of stigma and discrimination.”

Representatives from the ministries pledged to improve their responses to these issues. The National Strategic Plan for HIV/AIDS now recognizes the importance of YKAP in their prevention efforts.

“Although HIV epidemic in Myanmar is a concentrated one, if we cannot control, especially transmissions among young key population, there is a risk of spreading. Therefore, YKP is one of the priorities in our strategy as well as in National Strategic Plan 2016-2020.”

The inclusion of the term YKAP in official documents was considered one of the largest successes in the advocacy efforts. In the follow-on workshop to the above event in early 2014, key findings and recommendations were presented and discussed. KMH representing MYS attended this workshop and discussed abortion issues especially related to teenage pregnancy, and police harassment on YKAPs and how it affects their lives. Because of these efforts by concerned parties, **the term YKAP was also included in the recommendation section of the legal framework report.** After the workshop, YKAP began to receive more recognitions. Coincidentally, *the International Congress on AIDS in Asia and the Pacific (ICCAAP)* had also emphasized youths in their agenda, triggering more stakeholder interests in YKAP in Naypyitaw.

At the time of this documentation exercise, the Youth Advocates Project from Alliance Myanmar’s Link Up project was also attempting to send MYS members and other YKAPs in five different national technical working groups – Gender & Human Rights, HIV & Youth, Sexually Transmitted Infections, ART, and Harm Reduction – comprised of the Department of Health and INGOs. However, as some technical working groups such as ARV treatment and Harm Reduction meet sporadically, there have been some challenges in finding opportunities to participate. The English skills of members as well as little experiences in advocacy speech also often hindered the active participation of members even when they were present.

- 3) MYS can engage in advocacy efforts only when strong initiatives and guidance from INGOs are provided

MYS has been engaged in advocacy initiatives with financial, technical and capacity development supports from Alliance Myanmar, UNESCO, UNAIDS, UNICEF, and UNFPA. These agencies had different approaches in involving MYS, some focusing on human rights awareness, legal knowledge, and some basic advocacy concepts or media publicity. Through these activities, MYS was beginning to make its presence and the stigma faced by YKAPs known to some policymakers.

The most visible and direct advocacy effort that MYS was able to make so far was a meeting with policy makers. In late 2013, a series of HIV legal framework review workshops were organized by UNAIDS, WHO and UNFPA in the capital of Naypyitaw. The workshop highlighted HIV and legal issues among adult populations and involved “the Seven Networks” of KAPs as well as parliament members. Two leaders from MYS participated in this workshop with the Alliance Myanmar director and introduced their network and activities. This was the first introduction of MYS to the government of Myanmar. The reception of the parliament members were positive, and stated that they only knew about “the seven” major HIV networks but never knew about MYS who represented young affected persons. The morale of MYS members were boosted by this event as they have never been accepted by high rank officials and granted a meeting with them. The impetus for the participation was the leadership and guidance of the Alliance Myanmar director who brought them to the event.

However, there were areas of improvements in MYS’ involvement in advocacy. Similar to the points made earlier, there were only a limited number of members, a few leaders, who could represent MYS and effectively communicate their messages to stakeholders. The network in general required improved public speaking and presentation skills among CEC and general members. While many members were enthusiastic, there were very small pool of human resources who could grow into the role of representing YKAP and be involved in the higher level activities.

Another issue was the fact that MYS members tended to simply follow seniors from partner organizations and attend meetings quietly just to be present, rather than actively engage. Given the political and cultural environment of Myanmar, for younger persons to participate in an official meeting is understandably difficult. **The goal of “meaningful and active participations” in policy making processes prescribed by Alliance Myanmar seemed to require clearer definitions and strategies that are better contextualized in the political and social environment.**

Just as project activities in general, MYS had little initiatives or strategies of their own in their advocacy efforts. From outsiders’ point of view, MYS advocacy efforts can appear aimless and lacking clear strategies. One officer from a partner agency commented on MYS advocacy activities:

“Do they just want to raise awareness? Or do they aim for changes in policies or at least gain commitment? Their advocacy activities are not targeted. They don’t have enough skills. Approaches are not clear, communication channels and strategies are not very clear either... Of course, policy changes are not easy. But if they can at least effectively communicate, though they are young, that would be good... For example, the last joint advocacy workshop, they need to follow up. Like I said before, what do they really want? How should we divide our target audience into sub-groups? There are many groups involved. What messages do they want to send for each group?”

Advocacy is challenging when guidance from a partner agency is insufficient

Example of media dialogue

The lack of advocacy skills such as communication with stakeholders and preparations for data and evidence to convince authorities was evident. Members listed one media dialogue activity as an example of the difficulty they faced. The event was to advocate and gain support from the media about the issues YKAP face. Journalists from the media including magazine editors were invited to have a dialogue about the stigma and social isolation that YKAP suffered. However, on the day of the appointment, only a few journalists showed up in the meeting. When the MYS members provided their personal stories, journalists asked for more scientific evidence of stigmatization and discrimination with quantified data which MYS members were not prepared to provide. More preparation and planning was needed to make the event successful, but the leaders lacked needed experience and knowledge to conduct this type of advocacy. Members also needed specific guidance from the partner agency to communicate with the media personnel and prepare needed data and evidence to ensure positive outcome.



Figure 1: An image of MYS trying to implement projects drawn by members

Impact of MYS and Link Up on Individuals: Significant Change Stories

Story 1: Confidence, Support, and Acceptance

I started joining MYS because I like working in associations and also MYS is composed of four key populations. I learned about MYS through a Facebook friend from Mandalay. He connected me to Ko Myo Min Htet and then I became a member in July 2014. I participated in many MYS trainings, and now have become an alternate focal person of Yangon and one of the Central Executive Committee members of MYS.

In the past, I was a “hidden” gay. I was always worried that if people found out about my sexual orientation, they would look down on me. I was also afraid that my family would disown me if they knew I was gay. I am a lawyer by profession. At work my colleagues gossiped and laughed at me because I was given attention and interested by a police officer. Because of this incident, I didn’t go to the office anymore and was only going out to take trips.

After I joined MYS, I became more confident about myself because I could meet and learn from other peers. I also learned more about HIV. Most significantly I could accept myself as a gay. I became open to my family and to my colleagues. This is because I learned more about HIV and risk behaviors during “HIV Response and Youth Leadership” training organized by MYS. I also became more comfortable about myself after talking with peers during the training. In the past, my family prohibited me to make friends with transgender people because they thought I could be influenced by communicating with these people. I was also scared to befriend with transgender because people in my community might think of me as one of them and discriminate me. Now, at home I put gay information booklets and HIV pamphlets on the bookshelf so that my family could learn more about them.

My family members, relatives and neighbors now could understand me better. I can also accept transgender, PLHIV, sex workers and drug users because of learning about them from the trainings. I learned that everyone has equal rights to express his or her feelings. My communication skills with other people also improved. Unlike in the past, I feel even more comfortable in the office. I can live freely now! I can express myself openly as gay to my Facebook friends. I also encourage all of my friends to do HIV screening test. I also share information with my friends concerning sexually transmitted disease, contraception methods, and how to use condoms. My family always hid condoms and lubricants in the past. Now they let me carry condoms and lubricants wherever I go.

Link Up supports the development of MYS. Thanks to Link Up, MYS members could gain much knowledge. With the support of Link Up, YKAP groups improved their skills on HIV/AIDS prevention, human rights, and individual capacity. We could also lead our own peers in the prevention efforts. MYS could also strengthen its network in other townships because of Link Up.

Story 2: Ability to Assist Others

There was this young MSM, 17 years old. He got infected with HIV. Some other peer MSM wanted to help him but it was too difficult to reach him. As he was a transgender dressed as a woman, many peer MSM did not want to risk exposing themselves. He just took HIV test at an NGO without proper counseling or preparation. When he got a positive result, he dared not talk about this to his family. He was in trouble.

I was already aware of the Link Up project. A friend of mine was working in the project. I decided to meet this HIV positive MSM, pretending I was an NGO worker. Then, I managed to connect him to healthcare and ART services through Link Up.

I have also helped two other men, non-MSM, to get ART. I know that Link Up project targets young people aged 10-25 years. It can help young MSM. As I know, Link Up does not provide ART but it provides assistance to access ART from other centers.

Conclusion

At present, MYS is the only visible network of young people that involves all YKAPs. Their ability to reach and work with YKAPs in many townships, the existence of committed leaders within the network, and the eagerness of the members to contribute to their larger cause make the organization a valuable civil society counterpart to work with for partners and donors. Their presence allows us to have YKAPs represented and heard in our collective efforts to combat HIV. For many donors and collaborating agencies, it can be the first valuable experience of working closely with YKAPs. They provide opportunities for us to learn from YKAP and expand connections with more hard-to-reach younger populations through them.

Yet, there are challenges in working with the young organization. Their internal coordination and communication are irregular. It is sometimes difficult for outsiders to communicate with their decision-makers, as the line of communication and organizational roles are not always clear. As we have seen above, there are many unmet internal needs related to their administrative and management capacities. The fact that MSM members dominates the network also raises the question of unbalanced representation across YKAP communities. The levels of involvement of FSW and PWID are found to be low.

MYS also faces problems arising from the limited availability of skilled members to organize and lead. Active members had other occupations and roles to play restricting their time available. The limited experience and high turnover also make it difficult to involve members in project implementation. The development of the next generation of leaders is critically needed, but the small pool of active and capable members hampers the process. The lack of core funding to effectively manage and maintain the network through activities and keep members motivated is a major cause of high turnover and many other issues.

Despite these challenges, we find hope in their eagerness and energy to contribute. The popularity of “HIV Response and Youth Leadership Training” among YKAPs provides a testament to their enthusiasm and interests. MYS receives hundreds of applications, despite the fact that they can only involve so many at a time. One of successful events organized by MYS on International Youth Day also epitomized the positive energy of the YKAPs: “So many people came to the event, friends and friends of friends. We all danced and sung together. It attracted many visitors including the media.” What members of MYS call more experienced “adults”- in donor agencies and INGOs – should learn to tap into their energy by listening to their voices carefully and meeting their needs.

Recommendations

A) For Partner Organizations Working with MYS

1. MYS is a group of volunteer youth with a wide range of backgrounds, experience, and education levels. They are likely to require internal capacity building before implementing specific projects. Incorporate activities that help raise the capacity of the network including practical management skills in parallel with the implementation of funded collaborative projects developed by INGOs. Conduct an initial organizational capacity audit to identify areas of support needed.
2. There seemed to be a large gap between what was considered capacity building by international organizations and what was needed by MYS. The type of capacity building trainings provided by projects may not meet the internal needs of the young local organization. Create a common understanding and consensus of what constitutes organizational capacity with CBOs such as MYS before launching a project.
3. One of the goals of advocacy efforts in Link Up project was “meaningful involvement” of YKAPs in the drafting process of official documents. It may be useful to have a place of dialogue with MYS and others to consider what is needed by YKAP groups to realistically and meaningfully be involved in the process. The cultural, social, and political milieus of Myanmar are not necessarily conducive to this goal, and further contextualizing what “meaningful involvement” may mean may be necessary to avoid a token presence of YKAPs and MYS members in policymaking processes.
4. Use of a computerized online system for a project in remote townships may take precious human resources and time away from main activities, requiring staff to put in extra unpaid hours. For reasons such as unreliable online network infrastructure, unpredictable electricity, and low capacity for computer use, be cautious about the use of technology and the Internet, especially for projects implemented in local townships. If necessary, gradually introduce them with proper training and resources with a long term planning, and make a low tech system (e.g. paper and pencil) available as a back-up. If only one staff member is capable of using a computerized system, it could also create work overload or a stalled project if s/he becomes unavailable.

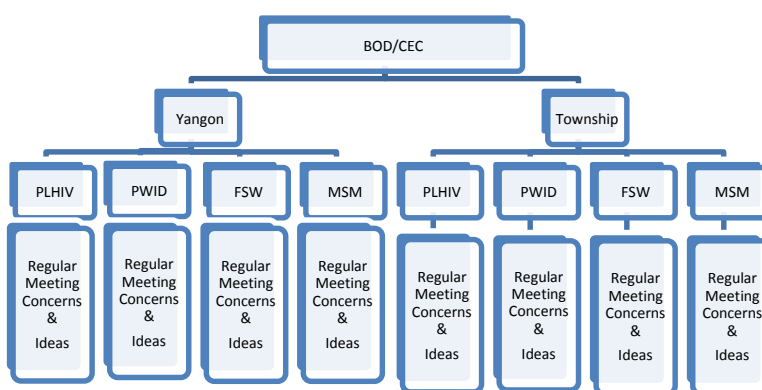
B) For MYS

1. Develop unique organizational vision and strategies by cultivating the strength of MYS as a **youth organization** that can reach a variety of populations and mobilize youth in multiple geographic locations in innovative ways. Emphasize this point for MYS’s “reason for existence.”

2. Members' motivations in joining MYS were opportunities to learn and contribute. With the limited number of workshops and trainings currently offered and uncertain opportunities to participate in these, members often found little incentive to stay in the network. Ensure that members have **ample opportunities to learn through training and workshops and to join in activities that allow them to contribute** their new knowledge in their communities. Have regularly scheduled meetings and engage in youth-led innovative and fun activities such as study groups and edutainment events particularly in local townships.
3. **Prioritize internal organizational development and capacity building** before pursuing external project objectives with collaborating agencies. Ensure that internal needs of the network are clearly understood by decision makers. Create opportunities for practical skill development to all members including rank-and-file members in townships to develop future leaders.
4. Lack of core funding made it difficult to meet regularly and simulate each other with new ideas. Raise funding for internal expenses such as monthly meeting, communication, and transportation costs. One barrier to involvement was **unsupported member expenses involved in participating** in activities. Raising **core funds to meet basic administrative expenses** seemed an urgent priority for the network for continued existence and long term planning.
5. **Delegate** administrative tasks such as organizational communication and maintenance of member list to paid staff. Volunteering CEC members are often too busy with the implementation of external projects to pay close attention to the maintenance and sustenance of MYS. The leaders should make efforts to restructure internal procedures and encourage internal activities to increase member participations and maintain their interests.
6. In a meantime, **revise terms of reference (TOR) of paid personnel** to include regular internal communication and coordination with all active members and potential recruits. Start with the creation of a regularly updated active member list.
7. **When funding is secured, bring in qualified and experienced external personnel** who have experience in working with YKAPs, even if those external hires are not necessarily from YKAP communities themselves. This will help meet urgent organizational needs such as reliable bookkeeping and accounting. This is likely to boost the organizational standards and quality of work to regain the trust of partner agencies and donors, as well as to support the leaders with administrative and restructuring tasks.
8. Institutionalize and systematize organizational procedures in actual day-to-day practices, not just on papers, including recruitment, participant selection, communication, and reporting. Much of what is stated in the constitution remains unpracticed. This assessment found that there were certain procedures working well previously, but they disappeared when members left the network. Retain and institutionalize what was working well by assigning a staff person in charge of maintaining these systems.

9. **Develop the second line of management and future leaders.** Increase the internal administrative and leadership capacity of the network by cultivating potential leaders through basic skills training and new recruitments. Make basic skills development part of regular activities. Until additional funding become available, study groups with volunteer instructors could be organized, including computer and software training, basic bookkeeping, communication skills (such as basic report writing), and English.

10. MYS has been predominantly an MSM group, and the level of participation by and acceptance of other YKAPs were uneven. To ensure the voices of non-MSM members are heard, **rearrange the organizational structure and create a separate task group for each YKAP (i.e. MSM/FSW/PWID/PLHIV).** Try to provide financial and other resources to these subgroups. This should also encourage new recruitment of additional members from underrepresented YKAPs.



Progress Report on the REAct System Implemented by MYS

Introduction

The term REAct represents “Right, Evidence and Action.” It is a community-based electronic system for monitoring and responding to human rights-related barriers in accessing HIV and health services². REAct is designed to assist community-based organizations gathering individual case information from their beneficiaries on human rights-related barriers in accessing HIV and health services. The system aims to

² REAct brief, International HIV/AIDS Alliance

manage and analyze the information to identify appropriate responses both at the individual and wider community level.

In Myanmar, REAct project is implemented in four different geographic locations by four civil society organizations that are partners of Alliance Myanmar – MYS targeting FSWs in Pyay, Myitta Shin CBO targeting FSWs in Mawlamyine, The Help self-help group targeting MSM in Mandalay, and Lotus CBO targeting MSM in Yangon. MYS is the youngest among these implementing partners. This report focuses on REAct activities implemented by MYS in Pyay.

MYS began implementing REAct in November 2014 after an initial training organized by Alliance Myanmar and facilitated by two trainers from the headquarters. REAct has two paid staff: a project officer and an interviewer. Both are active members of MYS and belong to YKAP communities. New Life Forward, another CBO partner of Link Up and Alliance Myanmar, provides the REAct staff with an office in Pyay.

The major activities of REAct staff in Pyay included networking with other organizations working with FSWs, raising awareness of REAct among stakeholders, case investigations and interviews, follow-ups, and record keeping. As of August 2015, REAct staff have conducted one coordination meeting, three sensitization meetings with stakeholders, and participated in events and meetings organized by other groups assisting FSWs.

The strategy of MYS in implementing REAct has been to work with other organizations that are able to reach the target population. The staff attend monthly meetings and events, and maintain regular contacts via phone and email with partners targeting YKAPs such as Color Rainbow's paralegal project, MSI, New Life Forward, Yaung Gyi Oo, Dragon Law Firm, Khittaya Swe Daw Oo, Top Center, The Truth Law Firm, Myanmar Nurses and Midwives Association's community home based care project and two self-help groups of sex workers: Myatta Enar and Phusin Myitta. The sensitization and coordination meetings mentioned above were also part of their strategy to promote the use of REAct.

Since the inception of the project in fall 2014, a total of 50 FSWs have been interviewed, among whom 11 were offered legal, medical, and other assistance. Between November 2014 and May 2015, REAct Pyay interviewed 30 clients, out of which 8 cases were reported after actions were taken to assist the respective clients in their computerized internet-based MARTUS reporting system that the Alliance Headquarters use. Between June and August 2015, 20 clients were interviewed, of which 3 received some form of support and were reported in MARTUS. On average, 4.5 FSWs have been interviewed each month, of which average one case is formally reported and offered assistance every month.

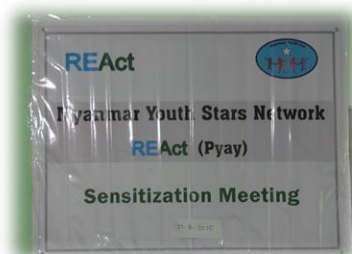
Strengths of REAct

The REAct system in Pyay had three advantages and strengths: committed staff, a community environment conducive to human rights work, and access to FSWs based on past service provision by multiple organizations. The staff of REAct Pyay demonstrated a strong commitment in the project.

Although they were paid only for four days per month, they worked three times as much, dedicating their personal time to networking and following up on cases.

The choice of Pyay as an implementation site seemed to have a strong advantage. Pyay had a history of community activism with active CBOs and medical and legal professionals monitoring human rights violations. Because of this, the community environment in Pyay was conducive to gathering information on egregious infringements on human rights and offering assistance to victims. There were existing networks of CBOs, self-help groups of sex workers and other YKAPs, political and social activists and pro bono lawyers in the community offering great potential for collaboration in case detection and service provisions. There have been examples of collaborative cases in which sex workers' self-help groups detected a case, the REAct system provided formal reporting, social support, and a referral to health care and a pro-bono legal advice. In addition, according to informants, police and law enforcement in Pyay, especially the Anti-human Trafficking Taskforce, were forced to act on community needs as these activists watch and exert pressure on these public systems. In general, local townships in Myanmar do not enjoy this kind of protective political environment.

Related to the positive community environment, Pyay had a history of service provision by a variety of CBOs and NGOs including sex workers' community and self-help, making it easier for REAct to reach the target population. REAct could exploit the network of CBOs and NGOs which have been able to establish trusting and working relations with sex workers, as these organizations acted as an important link between REAct staff and targeted beneficiaries. Peer educators of these organizations also assisted REAct staff to access sex workers in several brothels in Pyay and nearby towns.



Areas for Improvement

Several weaknesses were noted in the system. The MYS staff working for REAct were in need of more strategic guidance in effectively reaching potential beneficiaries among FSWs. While working many extra days, the staff members were spending much of their time trying to verify cases found through hearsay of others, only to find out many of which were not applicable to REAct. A lot of time was spent on finding potential victims, asking questions, and collecting evidence to verify the information. Often repeated visits were necessary involving multiple interviews with more than one informant.

One other reason for their long work hours was the entry in the MARTUS data storage system, which was rather complex and time consuming. The onus of the task fell on one project officer who had a level of computer literacy. He was the only person in the office who could manage the data entry. Much of

his time was occupied with MARTUS entry, as he was required to record all interviews and information in the system regardless of the relevance and outcome. As MARTUS had a highly specific set of criteria for reporting a legitimate human rights abuse case, less than 20% of cases were considered reportable and 80% of interviews were recorded but not reported. Given the fact that there was no other staff who could even use computers, as well as the frequent unavailability of the electricity and the Internet, the reporting system could easily become a significant barrier to the effective use of the REAct system.

The level of trust that the MYS staff could gain from sex workers to solicit the active use of the REAct system was another issue. Although MYS was supposed to be inclusive of all YKAP including FSWs, MYS was predominantly a MSM network, with the majority of members and leaders being young men, and did not have established working relations with FSWs. The limited experience of MYS in working with sex workers created one extra step of trust building for the REAct system to work. This seemed to be a major and fundamental issue as the potential victims of abuses had to trust the interviewers for anonymity and the ability to take concrete actions to warrant the risks that come with reporting their circumstances. Although MYS staff were extremely dedicated and hardworking, it was not clear why MYS was chosen as an implementer of the system targeting sex workers, especially when there were other active sex worker groups consisting of sex workers themselves in Pyay.

Another issue was the fact that there were other groups and professionals who could offer same assistances that REAct offered. As the beneficiaries were referred to the same medical, legal, and other professionals for assistance, they could have reach these assistance even without the REAct system. In other words, the potential benefits of using the REAct system were not clear to beneficiaries. Interviewees pointed out that sex workers might not be convinced enough that the benefits of reporting to REAct outweighed its risks. These risks ranged from minor interruptions of their daily work schedule by investigations to becoming noticed and harassed by police officers or even physical retaliation by perpetrators. Therefore, beneficiaries tended to bypass REAct and go straight to volunteer legal professionals known to them for advice.

One other small but important point was the lack of IEC material for the REAct staff to promote the system. There were no written material or cards explaining the benefits of REAct system or whom to contact if potential beneficiaries wanted to use the system. This information was vital for advertising the system not only directly to FSWs but also to those organizations and outreach workers who might have contacts with potential users of the system. The allocation of funds and technical assistance in creating these materials was lacking.

Recommendations to REAct

- a) **Pay close attention to the community environment of project locations:** Choosing a township with a receptive social and community environment with the existence of strong civil society groups seems to be a key to success. Many townships do not have a political environment conducive to this system, and in some places, the police and the authority may even have

extremely negative attitudes towards projects helping stigmatized populations including sex workers.

- b) **Choose a place with a long history of NGO/CBO interventions:** The existence of NGOs and CBOs working for same beneficiary populations can make a great difference for the success of the project. It would be much easier to build on the trust and networks already gained by these organizations.
- c) **Choose an implementer that already has the trust of beneficiary populations:** Similarly, choosing implementing partners who have already gained the trust of target populations can maximize the effectiveness of REAct.
- d) **Provide local implementing partners with ample support for outreach strategy development:** In order to reach a large number of beneficiaries who tend to be underground and hard to reach, much strategic support for reaching target populations is needed by implementing partners. In addition, the system of data collection and reporting should be easy enough for local staff with limited resources and education to report cases with an appropriate level of sensitivity and specificity.
- e) **Maximize the use of existing peer educators for outreach:** Contact and train existing peer educators from other NGOs, CBOs, and volunteer groups for the REAct system. They can help spread the message and benefits of the system to the potential beneficiaries that are otherwise hard to reach.
- f) **Ensure the availability of budget and technical assistance for locally contextualized REAct IEC materials:** An explicit line item should be allocated for developing and producing IEC materials to promote the use of the REAct system. Ideally, communication training and refresher should be given periodically to maintain the effective use of the IEC.
- g) **Reduce risks associated with reporting and make it easier for beneficiaries to use the system:** Trust building in target communities is of paramount importance, and taking measures to ensure that the risk of reporting - such as harassment by policy and retaliation by perpetrators - are minimized will help build this trust.
- h) **Make a variety of services available through the REAct system:** Most beneficiaries are willing to disclose their cases because of potential benefits that they may derive from it. It may be legal or medical assistance, or other support. Maximizing available support structures in communities through networking and collaborations with other organizations would help encourage the use of the system.

Conclusion

The REAct system can be a useful tool for human rights promotion and awareness raising in Myanmar. To maximize its potential, ample strategic guidance and support should be given to implementing partners who are tasked with reaching populations that tend to be hidden and hard to build trust with. INGOs should be encouraged to monitor closely and provide frequent strategic and technical guidance through close communication with local implementers. In addition, efforts should be made to maximize the package of services available for beneficiaries through networking and collaboration with a variety of groups and individuals in the communities. This may include the private sector, such as local legal firms who may provide pro bono services and hotel owners who may provide affordable housing to beneficiaries, or a local champion of human rights in the public sector who is sympathetic to target populations.



Examples of Reported Cases

1) Case of Police Abuse

In May 2015, one FSW who is HIV positive came from a brothel she lived. She has been caught by a police officer previously (Penal code 71). The police officer has been demanding money from her (KS. 5000) every time he sees her. In recent months, the abuse from the police officer escalated, and he began to send clients to her with no payments to her pocket. He keeps all the payments that the clients paid to himself. Unable to ask for help to anyone, she contacted the project after hearing about the service from the REAct peer educator. The REAct project officer brought the case to the steering committee to discuss possible actions. The members are planning to take the case to the higher authority – the Bago State/Regional Police Department. They are contacting volunteer lawyers to press charges against the police officer.

2) Case of Brothel Abuse

In February 2015, a FSW came to the project wanting to leave the brothel that she was working for. She has a husband but when her husband became disabled due to a traffic accident, she went to the brothel to support herself and her family. However, she found that 75% of what customers pay (KS 10,000) was taken by the brothel owner and she was only given 25% (KS. 2,500). She has contracted syphilis and other STD. She wanted to leave the brothel but was afraid to return to home as her parents-in-law were

abusive and prone to domestic violence. With no place to go, she came to the REAct project that she heard from her peer and asked for assistance. After contacting the REAct staff, she was placed in a temporary shelter that the project offer and sent to MSI clinic for STD treatment. She was also introduced to a livelihood and vocational training program that other CBO was offering to FSW and orphaned children. After 4 months, she has quit sex work, and gaining confidence to start a small business.

3) Case of Abuse by Relations

Sandy (pseudonym) lived in a village in Kamma Township, Magway Region in the central dry zone. She was looking for a job when her aunt told her that she could get a domestic helper job in Yangon. She left home with the aunt's arrangement, but in the end, she found herself being sent to Ruili near China-Myanmar border. She was then forced to work as a sex worker at a brothel owned by her aunt's daughter. Her parents did not know her ill fate until someone from her village accidentally saw her in Ruili. He reported this to Sandy's parents who immediately reported to the local police. But the police refused to take actions. Upon learning that Sandy's parents were preparing for a lawsuit, the brothel owner released Sandy and sent her back to the village. In search for justice, her parents came to Pyay as they have heard that assistances were available. The REAct staff along with other medical and legal professionals went to the village to meet Sandy. She was offered medical checkup and HIV counseling and testing, and was found suffering from mental trauma and to be HIV positive. A partner agency of REAct, New Life Forward, started ART for her, and REAct provided her with subsistence and financial support. They were also working with other organizations and professionals for legal actions against the perpetrators and further support for Sandy.

Annexes

Annex A: Number and Location of Active Members

(An active member is defined as reachable and can be mobilized for activities.)

State/ Region	City	Active members
Kachin	Myitkyina	5
Sagaing	Monywa	7
Sagaing	Kalay	1
Mandalay	Mandalay	5
Magway	Magway	14
Shan	Lashio	10
Rakhine	Sittwe	3
Bago	Pyay	10
Bago	Tharyawady	5
Bago	Bago	3
Yangon	Yangon	18
Ayeyawaddy	Pathein	2
Ayeyawaddy	Maubin	5
Tanintharyi	Dawei	15
Total		103



Annex B: Profile of Interviewees (Core members)

No.	KAP	Sex	Highest Edu Complete	Occupation	Father's Occupation	Yrs of MYS Membership	MYS Role
1	MSM, PLWHA	M	B.A (Phil)	NGO - Senior Program Officer	NA	3 yrs	BOD
2	MSM	M	B.Tech II (Civil Eng;)	CBO - Project Officer	Merchant	1 yr & 1 mo	Township Focal, Project Manager
3	MSM	M	B.Econ (Eco)	CBO-Volunteer Health Educator	Gov official	3 yrs	CEC
4	MSM	M	Graduate	CBO -Staff	NA	2 yrs	Township Focal
5	PLWHA	F	10th grade	CBO-Ass Project Mngr	NA	3 yrs	Township Focal
6	MSM, IDU	M	M.A. (Myanmar)	CBO - Volunteer	Editor	1 yr	CEC
7	MSM	M	10th grade	Store Assistant	Merchant	2 yrs	Township Focal
8	MSM	M	8th grade	CBO-Outreach worker	Grocery store	8 mo	Member
9	PLWHA	F	10th grade	CBO-Outreach worker	NA	1 yr	Member
10	IDU	M	10th grade	Driver	NA	7 mo	Township Focal
11	MSM	M	10th grade d	CBO - Health worker	NA	1 yr	Township Focal
12	MSM	M	B.A (Law)	Lawyer	NA	11 mo	CEC
13	FSW	F	10th grade	CBO -Project Manager	NA	3 yrs	Township Focal, CEC
14	MSM	M	Graduate	Private co - Manager	Merchant	1 yr	Member
15	IDU	M	2nd Year, History	CBO	Merchant	6 mo	CEC
16	PLWHA	F	10th grade	CBO	Seafarer	3 yrs	CEC
17	PLWHA	F	10th grade	CBO - Project Officer	Merchant	3 yrs	CEC
18	PLWHA	F	10th grade	CBO - Outreach Worker	NA	2.5 yrs	CEC
19	NA	F	10th grade	NGO - Project Assistant	NA	NA	BOD
20	MSM	M	B.A. (Phil)	CBO- Manager	Gov official	3 yrs	CEC
21	MSM, PLWHA	M	4th grade	CBO- Peer educator	NA	3 yrs	Township Focal
22	PLWHA	M	10th grade	CBO - staff	NA	1 yr	Member
23	MSM	M	B.Sc (Chemi), IT diploma	NGO – staff	Office worker	3 yrs	Member

Annex C: Milestone Activity Timeline

	Date	Name of Activities	Contents	Participants	Supporting & Partner Agencies
1	2012	ToT New Gen Training Leadership and HIV Response Training by UNESCO			UNESCO Youth Lead
2	2013	Pilot project funded by Link Up Developed MYS Logo and pamphlets Working group meetings started MYS Constitution was developed First Annual MYS Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocacy activities, sensitization and internal coordination First work plan drafted at the annual meeting 		Link Up
3	Feb 2014	TOT Advocacy Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alliance/Link Up training in Brighton 	Alliance	(Link Up)
4	5 May, 2014	Link Up Advocacy meeting with MYS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1st consultation meeting between MYS and Alliance 	MYS leaders Alliance	(Link Up)
5	2-3 June, 2014	Basic Advocacy Training Workshop		MYS Alliance	(Link Up)
6	10-11 June, 2014	Advocacy Strategy Development Workshop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identification of objectives and theory of change 	MYS Alliance	(Link Up)
7	28-30 June, 2014	TOT on HIV and SRHR Workshop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender, sex and sexuality, sexual rights of young people and violence Knowledge in and practice for BCC, conception, child deliver and abortion care and Family planning, HIV and STI, condom and lubricant Participatory learning, facilitator, communication and management skills, and how to cope with challenges, future steps 	30 MYS members including 13 township focal	(Financial support = UNFPA/MMA; Technical support = Alliance)
8	18-20 July, 2014	Human Rights and Legal Literacy Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Basic knowledge of human rights and legal literacy 	25 CBO/NW	(Link Up)
9	29-31 August, 2014	HIV Response and Youth Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HIV transmission among young people 	24 MSM 4 FSW 3 IDU	(Link Up) Alliance UNAIDS Module by

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective HIV prevention interventions • Leadership skills for young people to play a greater role in country's HIV response • Connection building and friendship and support among YKAP 	3 PLHA	Youth LEAD/APNYKAP/ U of Melbourne
10	Jul – Sep, 2014	Multiplier workshop on HIV and SRHR at the township level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One day multiplier workshop conducted once in each township: 13 multiplier workshops each quarter with about 20 YKAP. • Monitoring visit by the coordinator and technical advisor to the field • Sending key messages through cell phones for health seeking behavior • Providing OC pills, condom and lubricants, IEC distribution 	520 YKAP in 13 townships: Yangon, Mandalay, Lashio, Aung Ban, MoneYwar, Mawlamyaing, TharYarwaddy, Pathein, Magway, Myitkyina, Pyi, Bago and Myinchan	UNFPA Alliance
11	15 November, 2014	Evaluation Workshop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection on lessons learned from township level multiplier workshops and the prioritization of the important topics for HIV and SRHR workshop curriculum, and quality and improvement 	30 MYS	(UNFPA/YDP) One-day-Evaluation Report
12	15 November, 2014	Media Dialogue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness raising on YKAP HIV/SRHR issues and promotion of access to services through social media 	8 MYS 4 Media	(Link Up)
13	17-19 December, 2014	HIV Response and Youth Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HIV transmission among young people • Effective HIV prevention interventions • Leadership skills for young people to play a greater role in country's HIV response • Connection building and friendship and support among YKAP 	21 MSM 4 FSW 4 IDU 3 PLHA	UNESCO Alliance Module by Youth LEAD/APNYKAP/ University of Melbourne
14	May 2015	Joint Advocacy Meeting on Strengthening Coordination and Responses for Adolescents and Young Key Population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing life experience of YKAP regarding discrimination in education, employment and health sectors • Advocating for better responses in those sectors 	Directors from Min of Health, Min of Education, Min of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement	Alliance (Link Up) UNESCO UNAIDS UNFPA UNICEF

Annex D: MYS Constitution Excerpts (Translated from Myanmar)

(A) Board of Directors

- To be elected by Central Executive Committee
- The Board should have at least five members.
- The Board should include people from United Nations agencies, international donors, health professionals and other professionals.
- Board members should have understandings of YPAP's lifestyles
- Must have experience volunteering for organizations focused on HIV/AIDS, gender, SRHR, legal issues
- Must have the determination and commitment for improvements of the MYS.

RESPONSIBILITY

- Giving advice to the Central Executive Committee and the Implementation Committee
- No voting rights granted
- Must attend annual meetings of MYS and Central Committee meetings and advise on workplan and activities of MYS.
- Should be able to support writing grant proposals for MYS.
- Should be able to contribute to capacity building for strengthening the network.
- Should serve for one complete year.

(B) Central Executive Committee

- The Central Executive Committee should be composed of YPAP representatives elected by States and Regions. Should serve at least one year term.
- These representatives should meet regularly. The Central Executive Committee of MYS is the leading body of the network and should make important decision.
- They should manage and mobilize funds and donations. They have to lead in verifying, auditing and approving financial information, reports and activity reports.
- Discuss achievements and updates of the network members in States and Regions.
- Plan capacity building activities for YPAPs, implement advocacy activities, manage the project implementing committee. Coordinate with regional/area representatives.
- To serve a term of one year.

(b -1) Working Committee: Project Implementation

- This committee should widely be involved in management and administration.
- The aim is to materialize the objectives of MYS.
- To implement future plans of MYS.
- The committee should coordinate with government departments, UN agencies and civil society organizations.
- Leading the MYS meetings and MSM forums, prepare financial progress report for meetings and trainings, presenting for accountability and transparency.

- Presenting detailed records and accounts the CEC and township representatives for decision making
- Responsible for gathering information from and disseminating information to township members.
- Work with members to execute the plans developed by the CEC

(b-2) Working Committee: Capacity Building

- To assess capacity building needs of MYS members and present at regular meetings.
- To initiate capacity building plans in line with Mission and Objectives of MYS
- To consult with experts for the above plans and work with the Project Implementation Committee.
- Should be able to contribute as resource persons when needed
- To evaluate the plans and results and to make recommendations.

(b-3) Working Committee: Audit team

- The Auditor must have relevant experience.
- Should perform audit regularly. In case of any irregularities, the team should discuss with all members and BoD.
- The person performing the audit should have a reputable track record related to finance.
- To make sure all expenditures are appropriate and allowable.
- Continuously check the network's incomes, expenditures and balances.
- Must maintain integrity.

(b-4) Working Committee: Advocacy

- Should be interested in advocacy (or) have experience in advocacy
- To plan advocacy (lobby and campaign) activities and to present these plans at regular network meetings.
- The person in charge should report regularly on advocacy activities (at quarterly meetings)
- To present BoD if there is any potential advocacy and funding opportunities.
- To prepare statements for the media and get approval from the BoD and Implementation Committee.
- To represent the MYS in talking to the media/ news agencies. Should select appropriate persons as spokes persons.
- To regularly update advocacy activities and share them with members.

[Source: MYS Constitution - Translated]

Annex E: Results of MYS group discussions in Dissemination Workshop

What can MYS township members do to actively contribute to their communities?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Have monthly meetings regularly 2. Frequent contact and mobilization through township focal persons 3. Exchange information between township focal persons 4. Restructure township level organization 5. Develop quarterly plan and committees 6. Coordinate between members, focal persons and stakeholders 7. Health knowledge and skills building (HIV, SRHR, HIV & leadership, English speaking, basic computer skills) 8. Train focal persons for proper report writing, governance, communication and service delivery 9. CEC to help focal persons build trust in communities 10. Yangon team, together with stronger focal persons, to share experience and activities with weaker focal persons 11. Township focal persons to have meetings every two months and send meeting minutes (finance, technical support) 12. Support small expenses for monthly meetings 13. Develop MYS' own promotional materials, IEC materials
What can MYS members do to raise core fund and to strengthen capacities?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. CEC to keep in touch with potential donors and organizations who can support for core funding 2. Train CEC members and board members on skills for fund raising 3. Systematically document activities and achievements of MYS at township- and Yangon-levels, and share them with potential supporters 4. Focal persons to inform possible activities to CEC in advance 5. Charge a certain percentage to every project as a management fee of MYS 6. Set up a core funding mechanism with township members. Members' contributions can be utilized for capacity trainings (example – to organize self-help groups)
How can we ensure participation of all YKAP groups?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Have coordination meetings with other key population network (MSM, FSW, IDU, PLHIV) 2. Advocacy (sensitization) activities in townships where engagement with YKAP is weaker 3. Select potential leaders and train them 4. Have representatives from each YKAP group in CEC 5. Involve all YKAP proportionately in trainings

Annex F: Other documents available through this study

- Research Protocol (March 2015)
- Inception Report (March 2015)
- Workshop Report (June 2015)
- Individual Interview Report (August 2015)

Annex G: Data Collection Tools

Documentation of MYS Link Up Advocacy Activities

Individual Interview Guide: MYS Members and Leaders

(Final Version: April15)

Informed Consent: Township _____ Interview Date _____ Interviewer Code _____

Hello. My name is _____. We are here on behalf of MPPR to know more about MYS so that we can assist the capacity building of the organization. We will be asking you questions about various aspects of MYS. The information gathered may be used by Link Up Project for project improvement or further studies of civil society. All information that you give me will be kept strictly confidential, and names or any other personal information of the respondents will not be revealed in public.

You may refuse to answer any question or choose to stop the interview at any time. Do you have any questions about the survey? Do I have your agreement to proceed?

YES NO

Part I: Demographic Information

- Name _____
- Age _____
- Gender _____
- Highest grade completed _____
- Occupation/Work organization _____
- Father's occupation _____
- Length of membership _____
- Reason for joining MYS _____

- Role in MYS (Past and Current) _____
- Reason for leaving MYS (if applicable) _____
- KAP group _____

Part II: Network Assessment

Areas of capacity A: Involvement and accountability

	Question	Capacity Score				
		1	2	3	4	0
1. Process for involvement of new members	a) How does the network recruit new members? b) Does the network have consistent processes to gain the involvement of new members in network activities?	Processes do not exist	Some processes are used but not consistently	Processes are consistently used	Processes are consistently used and documented	I don't know. Explain why not.
2. Process for involvement for existing members	a) Does the network have consistent processes to gain the involvement of existing members in network activities? b) What are the processes?	Processes do not exist	Some processes are used but not consistently	Processes are consistently used	Processes are consistently used and documented	I don't know. Explain why not.

3. Obstacles to involvement	<p>a) Are there any obstacles for existing KAP members to be involved in network activities?</p> <p>b) Provide examples of the obstacles that limit the involvement of KAP members.</p> <p>c) Has the network tried to overcome obstacles mentioned above?</p> <p>d) How has the network tried to overcome obstacles mentioned above?</p>	The network does not understand the obstacles	The network understands the obstacles, but has not tried to overcome them	The network understands the obstacles, and has tried some ways to overcome them	The network understands the obstacles, and has tried all ways to overcome them	I don't know. Explain why not.
	Question	Capacity Score				
		1	2	3	4	0
4. Relevant objectives and activities	<p>a) Does MYS identify the needs of each KAP in defining the network's objective and activities?</p> <p>b) If yes, how does MYS identify the needs of each KAP in defining its objective and activities?</p>	The needs of YKAP members have not been identified	The needs of YKAP members have been identified, but are not reflected in the network's objectives and activities	The needs of the YKAP members are occasionally identified , and partially reflected in the network's objectives and activities	The needs of YKAP members are regularly identified , and are reflected in the network's objectives and activities	I don't know. Explain why not.
5. Monitoring and evaluation (M&E)	a) Does the network collect monitoring and evaluation data for its activities?	No-the network does not collect M&E data	The network periodically collect M & E data	The network regularly monitors and evaluates its activities and	The network systematically monitors and evaluates its	I don't know. Explain why not.

	b) If yes, how does the network collect monitoring and evaluation data?			shares this with its donors	activities to inform donors, management decisions, and members	
How did the Link Up project help improve the level of involvement of YKAP in MYS? Examples? (Eg. Quarterly meetings)						
What actions should MYS take to improve the level of involvement of all KAP members? (List in order of priority)						

Areas of capacity B: Advocacy

	Question	Capacity Score				
		1	2	3	4	0
1. Deciding what advocacy to do	<p>a) How does the network decide which advocacy messages are the most important and realistic to address?</p> <p>b) What messages are delivered?</p> <p>c) To whom are these messages targeted?</p> <p>d) What are advocacy occasions and outcomes? (e.g. Youth advocate, Photo Voice, International Youth Day, Technical Working Groups, GYCA etc.)</p>	The network does not have advocacy messages	The network leadership react to situations as they arise in the way they choose	The network uses processes and procedures to decide whether to address messages as they arises	The network uses processes and procedures to decide future messages to address	I don't know. Explain why not.
2. Planning advocacy	<p>a) Does the network plan its advocacy work?</p> <p>b) How does the network explain these plans to its</p>	Advocacy work is not planned	Advocacy activities are identified and agreed, but responsibilities, timelines and budgets are not planned in detail	Advocacy activities, targets, messages and allies are identified and agreed, but responsibilities, timelines and budgets are not planned in detail	Advocacy activities, targets, messages and allies are identified and agreed, including details of responsibilities, timelines and budgets	I don't know. Explain why not.

	CEC and Township focal persons?					
	Question	Capacity Score				
		1	2	3	4	0
3. Leadership representing the network in advocacy work	a) How does the leadership represent the network in advocacy work? b) Have the network advocacy efforts improved in recent years? c) How did Link Up help?	No skills or experience at representing network	Leadership is sometimes professional and has some skills but no experience	Leadership have skills and some experience	Leadership have effective skills and experience in communication and representation	I don't know. Explain why not.
4. Members representing the network in advocacy work	a) How do the members represent the network in advocacy work? b) Has the involvement of members in carrying out advocacy effort improved in recent years? c) How did Link Up help?	No skills or experience at representing network	Members are sometimes professional and has some skills but no experience	Members have skills and some experience	Members have effective skills and experience in communication and representation	I don't know. Explain why not.
5. Monitoring and evaluating advocacy work	a) How does the network monitor and evaluate its advocacy work (its outputs and	No monitoring or evaluation	The success of the advocacy work is only identified if the end goal is achieved	The successes and failures of the advocacy work is identified at different stages	The successes and failures of the advocacy work is identified at different stages and used to	I don't know. Explain why not.

	outcomes)?				strengthen future actions	
How did the Link Up project help improve the level and quality of advocacy work? Examples?						
What actions should MYS take to the level and quality of advocacy work and external communication? (List in order of priority)						

Areas of capacity C: Knowledge and skills

	Question	Capacity Score				
		1	2	3	4	0
1. Improving knowledge	<p>a) Does MYS encourage all staff and members to improve their knowledge (eg, HIV, Human Rights, SRHR, Legal literacy)?</p> <p>b) What are the activities done to improve the knowledge of MYS members?</p> <p>c) How did Link Up help?</p>	No mechanisms exist for improving knowledge	Some leaflets and information is made available but not shared across the network.	Knowledge is regularly accessed from a few external sources and distributed to members on request .	Knowledge is regularly accessed through a variety of sources and is actively distributed to members	I don't know. Explain why not.
2. Human rights and HIV	a) What do MYS staff and members understand about the relation between people's rights, legal protection, and HIV?	The network staff and members have no understanding	The network staff and members understand about discrimination and rights to protect	The network staff and members understand about human rights abuses leads to discrimination and infection risk, but do	The network staff and members actively use explanations of law and rights to help vulnerable people, or to advocate to	I don't know. Explain why not.

	<p>b) How do MYS staff and members apply the knowledge of people's rights and legal protection in their work?</p> <p>c) How did Link Up help?</p>			not know how to use in its work	others e.g. the police, MP etc.	
	Question	Capacity Score				
		1	2	3	4	0
<p>3. Skills training</p> <p><i>Emphasize internal administrative and organizational skills, and guidance and support CEC members & staff</i></p>	<p>a) How does MYS improve the practical skills of its staff and key members?</p> <p>b) What trainings have you received as a MYS leader/member? (eg. English, computer skills, or delivering multiplier trainings)</p> <p>c) What other opportunities do you have to increase your skills? (Mentoring, Conference, Exposure visit)</p> <p>d) How does MYS identify the skills gap</p>	No skills training is provided	Very occasional informal training is provided by one network staff or member to another when need arises	Frequent informal training is provided by one network staff or member to another when need arises	Training activities are organized to address skills gaps that have been identified in advance	I don't know. Explain why not.

	of its staff and members? e) How did Link Up help?					
4. Using skills	a) How do members use their practical skills in MYS activities? <i>Please explain with examples?</i> b) How did Link Up help?	No mechanisms to use members' skills	Skills are only used in time of current need	Skills of most members are known, and are occasionally used	Skills of members are known, and are used wherever possible	I don't know. Explain why not.
How did the Link Up project help developing the skills and knowledge of MYS leaders? Examples?						
What actions should MYS take to improve the knowledge and skills of its members? (List in order of priority)						

Areas of capacity D: Communication (Internal & External Communication)

	Question	Capacity Score				
		1	2	3	4	0
1. Internal communication procedures	a) Does MYS use documented internal communication procedures that say what should be communicated, when, how and to whom?	No, procedures do not exist	Informal procedures exist but are not documented	Informal procedures exist that are documented but are not implemented consistently	Yes, documented procedures exist and are implemented consistently	I don't know. Explain why not.
2. Communication resources	<p>a) Which communications resources do the network members have access to? Please mention the appropriate resource/s as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post office • Express courier service • Public telephone • Private telephone (landline/cell) • Email/internet <p>b) How do members communicate each other for reporting, training invitation etc.?</p> <p>c) How do MYS leaders communicate with township members?</p>	No resources exist	Most members have access to post and public telephone	Most members have access to post, and a private telephone (landline or cell), or a local group of network members share access to these resources	Most members have access to post, private telephone (landline or cell), and email/internet access , or a local group of network members share access to these resources	

	Question	Capacity Score				
		1	2	3	4	0
3. Inter KAP communication	<p>a) How do members from each KAP communicate with members from other KAPs?</p> <p>b) Are there any challenges in inter KAP communication? If yes, what are they?</p>	No particular efforts are made to communicate with members from all KAP groups	Members are encouraged to communicate locally and across KAP groups	The network partially communicates important internal information with KAP groups	The network fully communicates important internal information with all KAP groups.	I don't know. Explain why not.
4. External collaboration	<p>a) How do MYS leaders, staff and members collaborate with other stakeholders to improve the network and its activities?</p> <p>b) Are there ways for members to be involved in donor relations and fund raising? If yes, how? If no, why not?</p>	No particular efforts are made to collaborate with other stakeholders	Members are generally encouraged to collaborate with other stakeholders	The network sometimes collaborate with other stakeholders	The network routinely collaborate with other stakeholders	I don't know. Explain why not.

5. Confidentiality	Is confidentiality respected, including personal information, photographs and opinions of network members?	Confidentiality issues are not understood	Confidentiality issues are understood but not respected	Confidentiality issues are understood but not always respected	Confidentiality issues are always understood and respected	I don't know. Explain why not.
How did the Link Up project help improve the level and quality of communication among MYS members and other stakeholders? Examples?						
What actions should MYS take to improve internal communication among its members? (List in order of priority)						

Areas of capacity E: Leadership

	Question	Capacity Score				
		1	2	3	4	0
1. Who do you consider the leaders of MYS are?						
2. Leadership Characteristics 1) Patient 2) Decisive 3) Honest 4) Knowledgeable 5) Confident 6) Determined 7) Respectful of other's opinions 8) Able to accept when wrong 9) Unbiased 10) Positive thinking 11) Modest 12) Likeable	a) Does the network leadership have all the ideal leadership characteristics (12 listed in the next column)? b) How would you describe the MYS leadership?	No, none of the ideal characteristics	Less than 4 Characteristics	Less than 8 Characteristics	Yes (more than 8 characteristics)	I don't know. Explain why not.
3. Leadership skills 1) Listening 2) Writing 3) Speaking 4) Sharing information 5) Asking for ideas 6) Advocacy 7) Decision making 8) Strategic and action 9) Planning 10) Fundraising 11) Conflict management (preventing and solving disputes, motivation)	a) Does the leadership have all the skills of an ideal network leader (11 in the next column)? b) What are the strength and weakness of your leadership? c) How did Link	No, none of the ideal skills	Less than 4 skills	Less than 8 skills	Yes (more than 8 skills)	I don't know. Explain why not.

	Up help to improve the leadership skills?					
4. Leadership training	<p>a) Does the leadership train others to be able to lead tasks?</p> <p>b) If yes, how does the leadership train others to be able to lead tasks?</p> <p>c) How did Link Up help in the process of “Leadership Training”?</p>	The leadership does not train others to lead tasks	The leadership only provides guidance upon demand	The leadership provides on the job training to other members	The leadership provides mentoring and coaching regularly for their members to lead tasks	I don’t know. Explain why not.
	Question	Capacity Score				
		1	2	3	4	0
5. Leadership delegate tasks	<p>a) Does the leadership delegate task appropriately (the right task to the right people)?</p> <p><i>Probe: Do you think there are enough potential leaders to delegate tasks? Why? Why not?</i></p>	Tasks are not delegated	Some tasks are delegated (but NOT always the right tasks to the right people)	Some tasks are delegated (the right tasks to the right people)	All tasks that can be delegated are delegated appropriately	I don’t know. Explain why not.

6. Work planning and budgeting	<p>a) Does the leadership make sure that the network has an annual work plan and budget?</p> <p>b) How did Link Up help in this process?</p>	There is no annual work plan or budget	There is a list of activities that are dated and ordered, but with no budget	There is a list of activities that are dated, ordered for and budgeted	A written work plan exists, including who will implement the activities, when, and how the activity will be monitored. The work plan is also budgeted	I don't know. Explain why not.
How did the Link Up project help developing the leadership skills of MYS members? Examples?						
What actions should MYS take to improve the leadership skills of its members? (List in order of priority)						

Areas of capacity F: Management and finance

	Question	Capacity Score				
		1	2	3	4	0
1. Registration	a) Is the network legally registered?	No steps have been taken to register	Registration is not possible for our network membership	Registration is possible and the network has started the process of registration	Yes	I don't know. Explain why not.
2. Governing committee/board	a) Do you have a committee/board that meets and makes decisions that guide MYS' development? b) Are members of the governing committee/board elected? c) How often does this governing committee/board change?	There is no committee or board	The committee/board exists but it never meets	The committee/board meets occasionally but rarely agrees on any decision	The committee/board meets regularly (at least twice a year), with useful guidance and decisions made for the network	I don't know. Explain why not.
3. Governing committee/board documentation	a) Does the committee/ board have a document explaining its responsibilities and how it should be managed? b) How often does this document being reviewed and renewed?	There is no committee or board	Some guidance is documented and some is verbally agreed	A document exists but is not used to guide the actions of the governing committee/ board	A document exists which is used to guide the actions of the governing committee/board	I don't know. Explain why not.

4. Activities linked to goals and objectives	<p>a) Do you have agreed goals and objectives, which guide the network's activities?</p> <p>b) How often do these goals and objectives reviewed to reflect the needs of YKAP?</p>	Goals and objectives have not been developed	Goals and objectives exist, but are not used to guide activities	Goals and objectives exist, but are only occasionally used to guide activities	Goals and objectives exists and all activities are linked to them	I don't know. Explain why not.
	Question	Capacity Score				
		1	2	3	4	0
5. Job/role descriptions	a) Do you have documented job/role descriptions?	There are no job/role descriptions	Titles for positions exist but roles and responsibilities are not documented	Job/role descriptions are documented to show management responsibilities	Job/role descriptions are documented. Job descriptions are used to monitor the effectiveness of individuals and improve their work	I don't know. Explain why not.
6. Up-to-date accounts	a) Does your network keep accounts of money that can be presented on demand?	No accounts are kept	Records are kept of money received and spent but not compared	Accounts are kept up to date and statements are prepared and available at the end of the year.	Accounts are kept up to date and statements are prepared and available four times a year, or on demand	I don't know. Explain why not.

7. Budgets and cash flow planning	a) Does your network prepare, monitor and review a budget?	Budgets are not prepared	Budgets are prepared by the leadership to decide how much money to spend on the network's cost and activities	Budgets are prepared annually and presented to the committee/board or representative group of members for approval	Budgets are prepared and approved, and compared to accounts of money spent at least every 6 months to check that the network has enough money	I don't know. Explain why not.
How did the Link Up project help improve management and financial accountability? Examples?						
What actions should MYS take to improve management and financial accountability? (List in order of priority)						

Part III: Most Significant Story

“Most Significant Story” Collection Form

We are trying to collect real stories of how Myanmar Youth Stars or Link Up project has affected a member of Young Key Affected Population (YKAP). You may write your own experience or another YKAP’s experience that you know well. We will select the most significant stories for our report. We truly appreciate your contribution. We may use your story in our reports, but we will use pseudonyms and keep your information unidentifiable to protect your privacy.

In your story, we are looking for changes affected by MYS/Link Up in any of the following areas –

1. Changes in **the capacity** of YKAP for choosing actions, working with others, engaging stakeholders, etc.
2. Changes in the **knowledge** and **behaviors** of YKAP
3. Changes in the **attitudes** towards YKAP of general population, uniformed officers, or other authorities
4. Changes in the **recognition**/ legitimacy of MYS in representing YKAP
5. Changes in the experience of YKAP accessing health **services** provided by MYS or Link Up

Please tell us your or others’ experience related to MYS or Link Up activities by answering following questions:

A. Describe how you first became involved with MYS and what your current involvement is.

B. From your experience, describe a story that illustrates the most significant change that has resulted from MYS membership and involving in its activities.

C. Why was this story significant for you?

D. In your opinion, how did Link Up project contribute to this change?

Township: _____

Your Name (Contact purposes only): _____

Your Pen-name (This name will be used if your story is selected.): _____

Your Contact Number (To contact you if your story is selected.): _____

Note:

- If your stories include persons' names, please use pseudonyms. Do not use real names.
- After you have written the story please send a hard- copy to Ms. Ei Mon Kyaw (or) Ms. Zin Mar Phyo at Alliance, Yangon office or a soft-copy to **mystories2015@gmail.com**, by **30thJuly2015**.
- Should you need further information please contact Ms. Phwe Phyu The (MPPR) at 09 731 44192 or email at phwephyu@gmail.com.